GAME OF THE YEAR AWARDS

NOV-DEC 85 VOL 5.5 $2.95

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

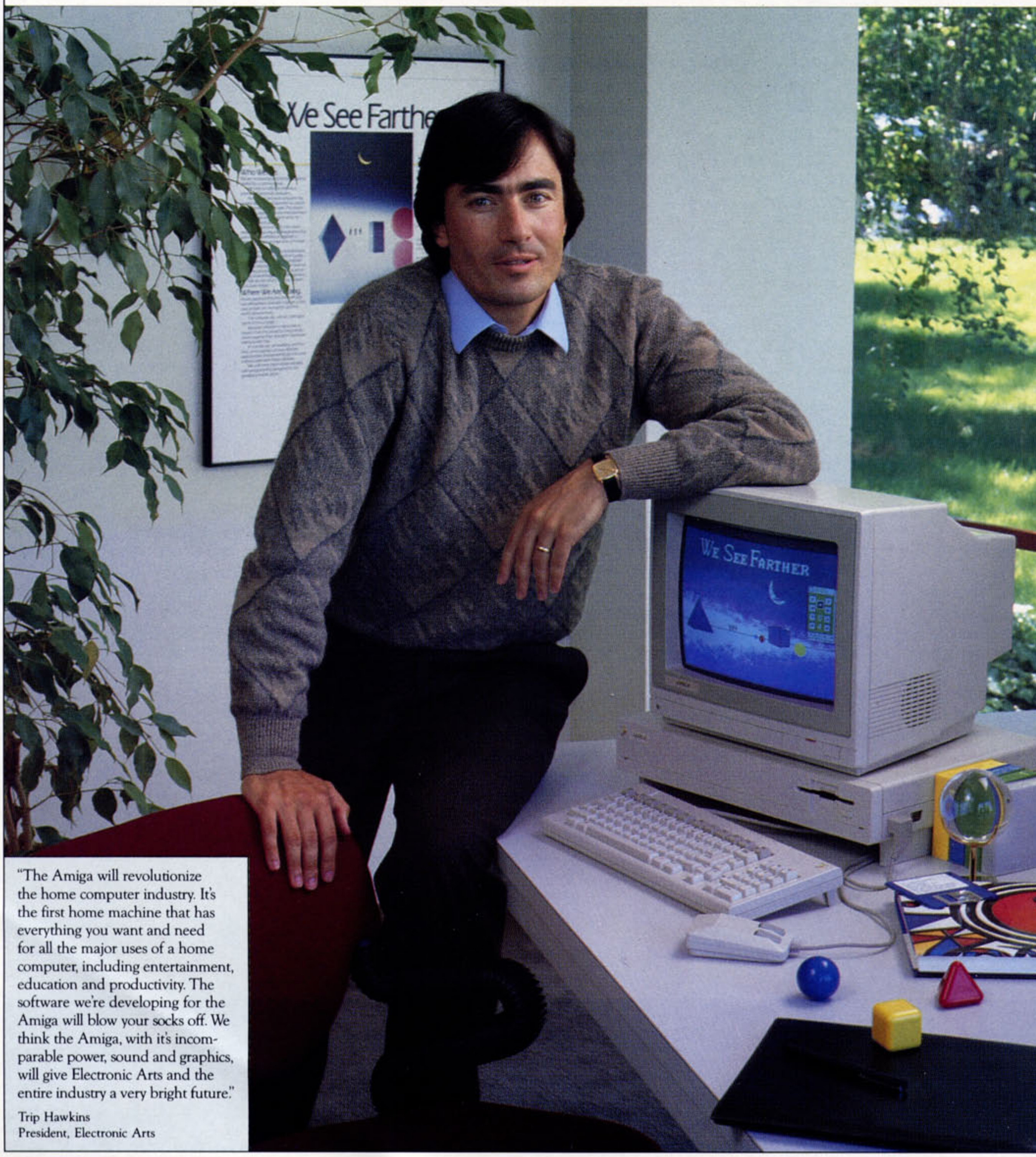
THE JOURNAL OF COMPUTER GAMING



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MICROPROSE'S COMMAND SERIES

A message from a leading software publisher.

WHY ELECTRONIC ARTS



"The Amiga will revolutionize the home computer industry. It's the first home machine that has everything you want and need for all the major uses of a home computer, including entertainment, education and productivity. The software we're developing for the Amiga will blow your socks off. We think the Amiga, with it's incomparable power, sound and graphics, will give Electronic Arts and the entire industry a very bright future."

Trip Hawkins
President, Electronic Arts

IS COMMITTED TO THE AMIGA.

In our first two years, Electronic Arts has emerged as a leader of the home software business. We have won the most product quality awards—over 60. We have placed the most *Billboard* Top 20 titles—12. We have also been consistently profitable in an industry beset by losses and disappointments.

Why, then, is Electronic Arts banking its hard won gains on an unproven new computer like the Amiga?

The Vision of Electronic Arts.

We believe that one day soon the home computer will be as important as radio, stereo and television are today.

These electronic marvels are significant because they bring faraway places and experiences right into your home. Today, from your living room you can watch a championship basketball game, see Christopher Columbus sail to the New World, or watch a futuristic spaceship battle.

The computer promises to let you do much more. Because it is interactive you get to participate. For example, you can play in that basketball game instead of just watching. You can actually be Christopher Columbus and feel firsthand what he felt when he sighted the New World. And you can step inside the cockpit of your own spaceship.

But so far, the computer's promise has been hard to see. Software has been severely limited by the abstract, blocky shapes and rinky-dink sound reproduction of most home computers. Only a handful of pioneers have been able to appreciate the possibilities. But then, popular opinion once held that television was only useful for civil defense communications.

A Promise of Artistry.

The Amiga is advancing our medium on all fronts. For the first time, a personal computer is providing the visual and aural quality our sophisticated eyes and ears demand. Compared to the Amiga, using some other home computers is like watching black and white television with the sound turned off.

The first Amiga software products from Electronic Arts are near completion. We suspect you'll be hearing a lot about them. Some of them are games like you've never seen before, that get more out of a computer than other games ever have. Others are harder to categorize, and we like that.

For the first time, software developers have the tools they need to fulfill the promise of home computing.

Two years ago, we said, "We See Farther." Now Farther is here.

ELECTRONIC ARTS™



Dr J and Larry Bird Go One-On-One

The number one software sports game of all time. Shoot as accurately as Larry Bird, slam dunk like the Doctor, while you're cheered on by the victory chants of the Boston Garden crowd.



Skyfox™

Get in the spaceship and fly. Out your window or on your radar screen you have but split-seconds to appreciate the fierce beauty of enemy jets and tanks.



Seven Cities of Gold™

Be Christopher Columbus and discover the New World. Learn history and geography, or generate your own random new worlds to explore.



Archon

A new kind of computerized board game, like chess with wizards and dragons for pieces. But when one lands on another, they have to fight a white-knuckled action battle.



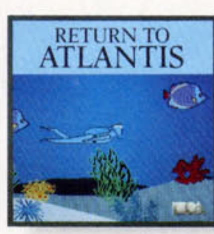
Deluxe Video Construction Set™

Be your own video director for business presentations or just for fun. Set up special effects, animated computer graphics, sound effects and titles — even record them to videotape for use with a VCR.



Arcticfox™

You command the advanced and deadly tank of the future – the Arcticfox. A first person tank combat game with all the stunning graphics and sound of the best 3-D simulations.



Return to Atlantis™

Play Indiana Cousteau, oceanic hero, in this three dimensional simulation under the seven seas.



Marble Madness™

For the first time, the home version of a coin-op arcade game is just as good as the original. Same graphics. Same sound. And you can play it in your bathrobe.

For details about availability, see your Amiga software dealer or call us at (415) 572-ARTS. For a product catalog send $.50 and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Electronic Arts, Amiga Catalog Offer, 2755 Campus Drive, San Mateo, CA 94403. Amiga is a trademark of Commodore Business Machines. Skyfox, Seven Cities of Gold, Deluxe Video Construction Set, Arcticfox, Return to Atlantis and Electronic Arts are trademarks of Electronic Arts. Marble Madness is a trademark of Atari Games, Inc.

Reader Service #1

FEEL WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE IN THE FIELD OF FIRE.

When you play FIELD OF FIRE™, you'll lead one of the finest fighting forces of World War II — Easy Company of the First Infantry Division — into eight historical battles.

Dividing your company into fireteam units of six men, you'll engage in such exciting combat as a night raid in North Africa, the storming of Omaha Beach on D-Day, or a defensive delaying action in the Battle of the Bulge — all against German forces controlled by your cunning computer.

Special attention has been paid to the Hi-Res graphics and lively sound effects. Realistic rules cover every aspect of the fighting: Line-of-sight, hidden movement, weapons ratings. Even your soldiers' abilities will improve through time.

To experience the heart-pounding thrill of commanding these heroic men, run to your nearest game or computer/software store today!

If there are no convenient stores near you, VISA and M/C holders can order this $39.95 game direct by calling 800-227-1617, ext. 335 (toll free). In California, call 800-772-3545, ext. 335. Please specify computer format and add $2.00 for shipping and handling.

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Vol. 5 No. 5 **Nov-Dec 1985**

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Telephone: 714-535-4435

Advertisers List is on page 6.

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

◄ Reader Service #2

TAKING A PEEK

CBS Software
One Fawcett Place
Greenwich, CT 06836
203-622-2500

DREAM HOUSE: A chance for the you to become an architect and interior designer without leaving the keyboard. The user can build a Victorian, Georgian, Colonial or cottage, manipulate the floor plans (bird's eye and cut-away) and decorate the various rooms. Includes animation and sound effects. A well-done product, despite being aimed at a limited audience. C-64, Apple. $39.95.
Reader Service #3

THE SEA VOYAGERS: A learning program devoted to the Age of Exploration. Covers 30 famous sea voyagers, from Covilha of Portugal (1486) to Captain Cook (1776). Graphics display a map of the world with a dotted line showing the particular voyage being discussed. Rather shallow in historical depth but is a good introduction for junior high history students. C-64, Apple, IBM. $39.95.
Reader Service #4

QUINK: Game of knowledge and association for one or two players. Each Quink challenge presents a screen of eight randomly-generated places, names or objects and a common bond or association the entries may share. 150 subjects from Grammy Winners to Wines of the World. Five levels of play with color graphics and musical cues. C-64, Apple & IBM. $34.95. Reader Service #5

Avalon Hill
4517 Harford Road
Baltimore, MD 21214
1-800-638-9292

UNDER FIRE: Tactical World War II combat from 1939 to 1945. U.S., German and Soviet armies, tanks like the Sherman and Panther, halftracks, artillery, anti-tank guns, etc. Infantry units including paratroopers, engineers and mountain troops. Extended capability disks (to be published) will expand the roster and add armies of other nations. Three different map scales - situation map, strategic map and tactical map. Mapmaker disk allows creation of scenarios. Solitaire or two player. Keyboard or joystick (required on II+). Apple family. $59.95. Reader Service #6

Activision
2350 Bayshore Frontage Rd.
Mountain View, CA 94043

COUNTDOWN TO SHUTDOWN: Arcade game where your objective is to find and stabilize the core of a nuclear reactor. You choose Mechanized Rangers, each with different skills and attributes, to 'send down the shaft'. The plant is defended by droids that you must destroy or avoid. Eight levels with hundreds of rooms per level. C-64 & Apple.
Reader Service #7

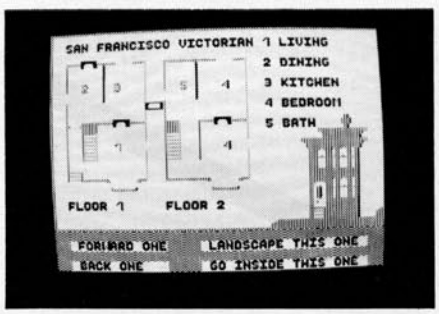
Artworx
150 North Main Street
Fairport, NY 14450
800-828-6573

INTERNATIONAL HOCKEY: A sequel to Slapshot Hockey. Additional features include speech synthesis and two player action. One player mode offer three levels of difficulty. Overly aggressive play will lead to a bench-clearing brawl! Penalty shots are also included. C-64 & C-128. $24.95 Reader Service #8

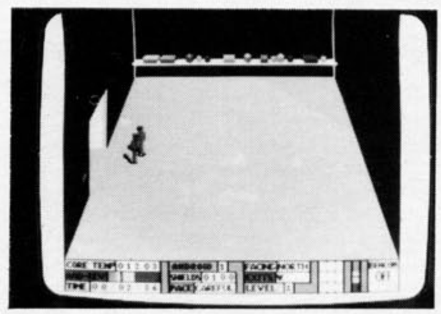
Commodore Business Machines
1200 Wilson Drive
West Chester, PA 19380

QUESTPROBE (Featuring The Hulk): A text and graphics adventure game by Scott Adams, the father of adventure gaming. In this one you control Bruce

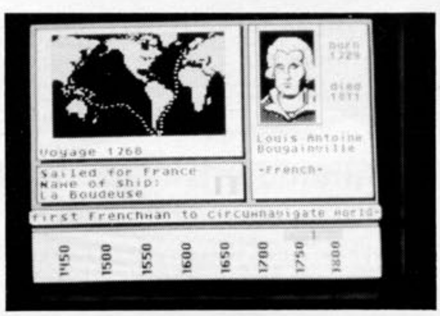
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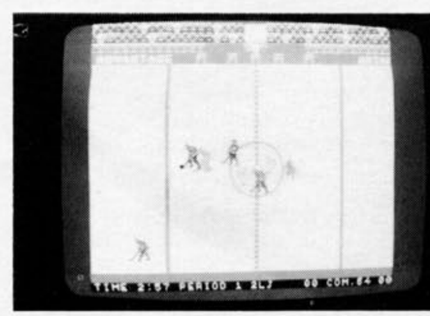
DREAM HOUSE



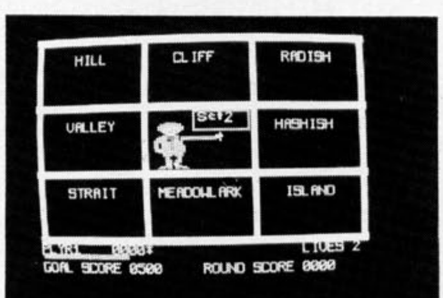
COUNTDOWN TO SHUTDOWN



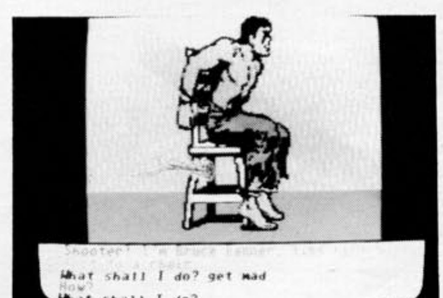
THE SEA VOYAGERS



INT'L HOCKEY



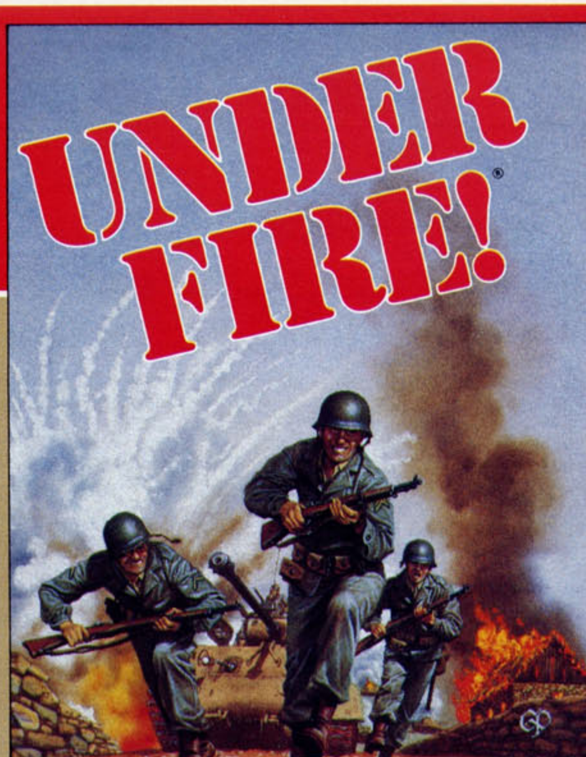
QUINK



QUESTPROBE

Reader Service #9 ➤

UNDER FIRE!



It was quiet under the blistering Russian sun except for the rumble of gunfire off through the hills. Through his binoculars, the Soviet lieutenant could see the road leading into the dacha. The hedge blocked his view of most of the ground, and nothing could be seen moving among the second story windows. His orders were to take his squads and three T34/76 tanks in and occupy the abandoned country house.

From the wheatfields of Russia to the hedgerows of northern France, this is the world of **Under Fire**, the game of tactical World War II combat. Commanding an array of armor, infantry and support guns, take your men into the razor's edge of combat.

The lieutenant stood up and waved his arm in a circle. Around him arose fifty men who deployed in a line. Silently, they passed through the cool woods toward the hedge, their eyes scanning the windows, their fingers calmly resting on the trigger guards of their rifles.

Men and weapons from the United States, Germany and the Soviet Union are represented. The map is a topographic recreation of the ground they fought over, shown in three different scales. Choose the situational map for the strategic flow of battle, or the tactical screen that shows the terrain in amazing detail.

They were 30 meters from the hedge when the land exploded in smoke and flame. A machine-gun nest spoke from a window, sending the patrol to the earth. The hissing rocket from a panzerfaust caused one of the tanks to explode, its crew bailing out of all hatches. Two Panther tanks moved out from under their cover. The lieutenant ran forward in a crouch, waving to the squads that were not pinned under fire to follow.





Strategic and Tactical Maps.

Front line combat is never predictable. Hidden units can appear out of nowhere, attack and vanish again. If caught in the open, a green squad can break and suffer horrendous casualties, while veterans rush for cover. In **Under Fire**, squads are rated for morale and training. The computer handles all line-of-sight problems, and can direct the fire of your units. Without the complexities of figuring odds and terrain charts, finding the proper strategy depends upon instinct and experience. All of the uncertainties of combat are present.

The lieutenant and his patrol moved swiftly and methodically through the woods. One of the T34's entered the yard and was trading shots with the Panther. A German squad was suddenly flushed from their hidden position and was cut down by the tank's machine gun.

Under Fire, lets you begin play immediately! All orders are entered using simple keyboard or joystick commands, and there is a helpful tutorial in the rulebook to take you step-by-step into your first battle. The nine scenarios range from open-field firefights to house-to-house conflict. Each scenario can be different when you change the ten variables, including nationality, skill level and victory conditions.

A Wargame Construction Set!

Design your own maps and scenarios. It's easy with **Under Fire**. The Mapmaker disk can re-create the **bocage** of Normandy, the Russian steppes and the final assault on Berlin! Design the order of battle to emphasize infantry, armor or a mixture of the two. Choose among other factors, the weather, map scale, general orders and victory conditions. Order a squad to attack or defend terrain, destroy the enemy, delay the advance or break out of the pocket. Finally, save your own scenarios to disk and they'll be ready to play anytime (the computer is always willing to play). **Here's what you get:**

- **Three disks:** containing the game, a roster of German, Russian and American infantry and tanks, and nine scenarios. The Mapmaker disk helps you create maps for your own scenarios.
- An extensive **rulebook**, containing all the rules, tactical notes, a tutorial to start you on your first scenario right away, and an index of screen commands. **$59.95**

Computer Requirements:
Apple® II family of computers (II+, IIe, or IIc), 64K
One disk drive
Joystick required for II+; optional for IIe and IIc
Mockingboard™ optional
TIME SCALE: varies.
MAP SCALE: From 12 meters/position to 72 meters.
UNIT SCALE: infantry squad, individual tanks and guns.
PLAYERS: One or two, also recommended for team play.
PLAYING TIME: From 10 minutes for a two-squad battle to five hours for 32-squad firefight.
COMPLEXITY: High.
SOLITAIRE SUITABILTY: Very high.

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1-800-638-9292

microcomputer games DIVISION
The Avalon Hill Game Company
4517 HARFORD ROAD, BALTIMORE, MD 21214 (301) 254-9200

Banner, aka The Hulk, with the assignment of unlocking the riddle of the Chief Examiner, the overseer of the Questprobe series (12 in all, each adventure complete and separate). The parser is not very sophisticated by current standards but the game should appeal to pre-teens. C-64 & C plus/4.

Reader Service #10

Data East
470 Gianni Street
Santa Clara, CA 95054
800-538-5129

KARATE CHAMP: This is the home version of the hit arcade game. Player can choose from thirty possible moves, modeled on real-life karate action. This is an exact translation of the arcade game. One or two player option. A similar game, Kung Fu Master will soon be available. C-64, C-128 & Apple II series. $29.95.

Reader Service #11

Epyx
1043 Kiel Court
Sunnyvale, CA

WINTER GAMES: A continuation of the successful Olympic series by Epyx (Summer Games & SG II). This one includes six winter events - bobsled, ski jump, figure skating, free-style skating, hot dog aerials and the biathlon. Opening, closing and awards ceremonies. One to eight players. C-64 & C-128.

Reader Service #15

TEMPLE OF APHSHAI TRILOGY: By computer game standards this one is from the Stone Age (my own copy is for a TRS-80 Model I). The games have been 'modernized' with new graphics, enhanced sounds and faster play, but they still won't be confused with newer graphic adventure games. One player. C-64/128, Atari, Apple & IBM. $29.95

Reader Service #12

OIL BARONS: A hybrid simulation, computer graphics plus a cardboard game board. You are a wildcatter (one to eight players) in a contest to see which can player can amass the most wealth. Considering the 64K limitations, the game is a rather good oil exploration simulation. Requires careful planning and strategy. C-64.

Reader Service #13

Cosmi
415 N. Figueroa
Wilmington, CA 90744
213-835-9687

SUPER HUEY: A 'Flight Simulator' for helicopter fans. Teaches how to fly rotary wing aircraft and then becomes a game, with four separate missions - Solo Flight, Rescue, Explore and Combat. The craft is modeled on the Bell UH-1 but has been highly modified, a la "Air Wolf". The game also has many of the features of Skyfox - electronic instrument console, on-board computer and a hi-res landscape. C-64. $19.95.

Reader Service #14

First Star Software
18 East 41st Street
New York, NY 10017
212-532-4666

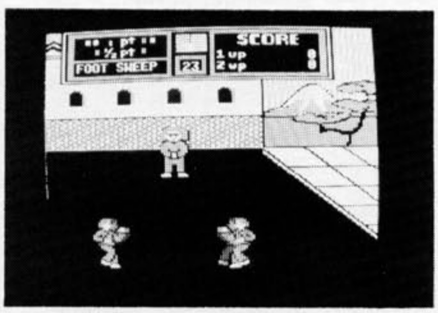
SPY VS SPY (THE ISLAND CAPER): Volume two in Mad magazine's ongoing comic adventure series. This one features full scrolling screens, animation, shark attacks, coconut bombs, etc. The primary change is "Simulvision", windowing that allows both players to be active at the same time. Solitaire play also supported. C-64/128.

Reader Service #16

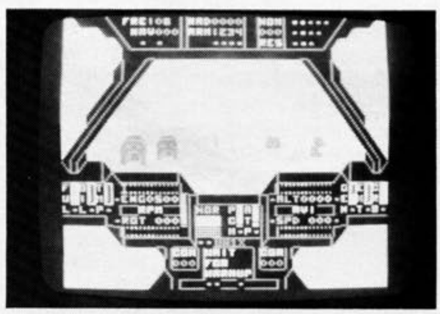
STAR RANK BOXING: A combination of arcade and strategic play. Create your own boxer with a choice of styles, looks and images. Then go into training with light bag, heavy bag and roadwork. Play solitaire against one of 19 different computer opponents or send (via disk) a created boxer to a friend to fight. The boxing action is pure arcade, with no option for computer vs computer, as allowed in Championship Boxing by Sierra. C-64.

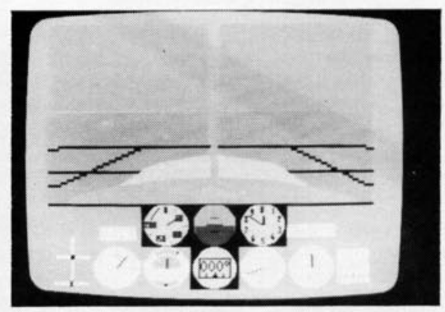
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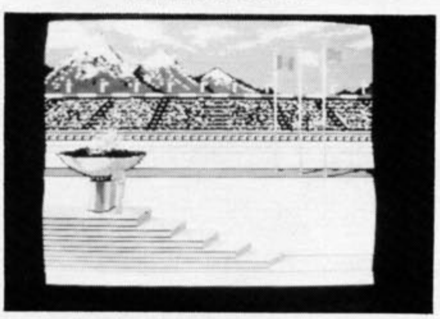


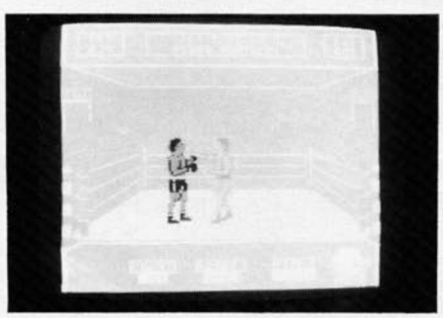


KARATE CHAMP


SUPER HUEY

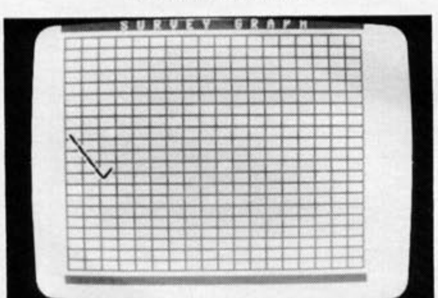

STUNT FLYER


WINTER GAMES


STAR RANK BOXING

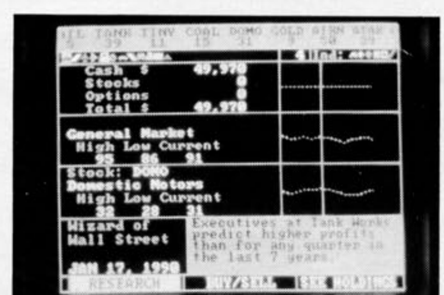


THE NEWSROOM



OIL BARONS


ICON



WIZARD OF WALL STREET

Macrocom
PO Box 70012
Marietta, GA 30007
800-MAC-8086

ICON: An advanced video game/adventure loosely based on Richard Wagner's Ring of the Niebelungs. Elements of the four operas are incorporated into the plot. Explore mazes, solve puzzles and engage in interactive combat situations. Advanced technical features that permit standard PC color graphics adapters to display far more than four colors. The game can display as many as 60 independently moving, multi-colored, animated figures on the screen at one time - while scrolling the map background. IBM.

Reader Service #18

Sierra On-Line, Inc.
Coarsegold, CA 93614
209-683-6858

STUNT FLYER: An aerobatics flight simulator based on the premier stunt plane - the Pitts Special bi-plane. A very sophisticated package that gives a good basic course in flying, along with the fun of learning aerobatic maneuvers. Among these are: Slow Roll, Inside Loop, The Hammerhead, The Spin, Immelmann, etc. (21 in all). The attention to detail indicates the care that went into this program. C-64/128. $24.95

Reader Service #19

Springboard Software
7807 Creekridge Circle
Minneapolis, MN 55435
800-328-1223

THE NEWSROOM: A program for creating surprisingly stylish publications. A good introduction to journalism for novices. You can write, edit, illustrate and add a personal touch to each publication. Useful for neighborhood newspapers, newsletters, brochures, flyers, etc. A lot of fun for frustrated/would-be Woodward & Bernstein types. Optional disks are available containing additional artwork, called Clip Art Collection. Apple, C-64 & IBM.

Reader Service #20

Synapse
17 Paul Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903
415-479-1170

WIZARD OF WALL STREET: Real-time stock market simulation. Scrolling news headlines, tickertape and three skill levels. Players can buy and sell 12 to 24 stocks and options in six different industries. Sell short and buy on margin. Adjustable game speed. IBM.

Reader Service #21

LODE RUNNER'S RESCUE: A sequel to the popular Lode Runner series. 46 levels, 3-D action and sound effects. Includes a game editor to create your own mazes and challenges. Atari, C-64.

Reader Service #22

Strategic Simulations, Inc.
883 Stierlin Road
Bldg. A-200
Mountain View, CA 94043
415-964-1353

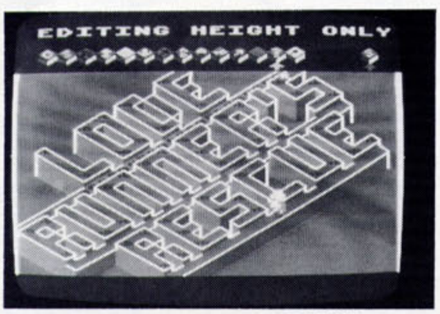
PANZER GRENADIER: Solitaire WW II game depicting platoon/company level warfare between Germans and Russians on the Eastern Front. Five scenarios with 1-2 hours per scenario. Three difficulty levels. Each tank unit consists of 3-5 tanks (Panzer, Tiger, etc) and each infantry company has 100-150 men. Easily the least attractive box art of any SSI game. Atari. $39.95.

Reader Service #23

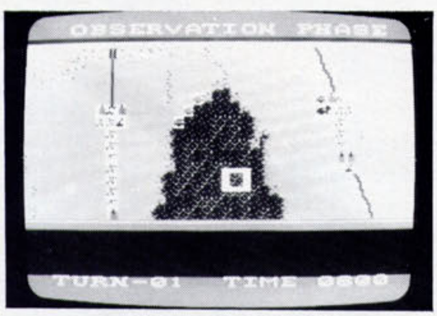
subLOGIC Corp
713 Edgebrook Drive
Champaign, IL 61820
800-637-4983

JET: A high-performance jet flight simulator. Jet simulates the land-based F-16 Fighting Falcon and the carrier-based F-18 Hornet. Free-flight non-combat mode plus a variety of land/sea strike or dogfight options. Aircraft is equipped with a "Heads Up Display". Compatible with all subLOGIC Scenery Disks. Around here the most play involved the F-18 and its aircraft carrier. Flight Simulator I & II set the standard for this type of program, subLOGIC has now brought the concept into the JET age. IBM. $49.95

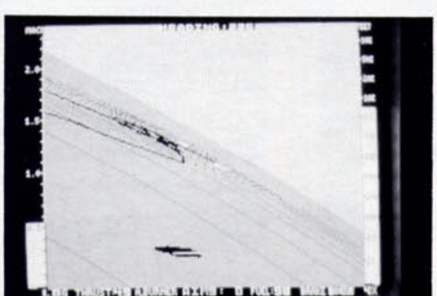
Reader Service #24



LODE RUNNER'S RESCUE



PANZER GRENADIER



JET

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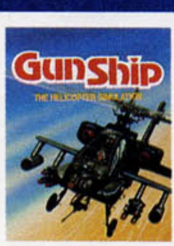
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WISHBRINGER

As told by Scorpia

WARNING! Scorpion's Tale contains hints on solving computer adventure games. If you do not want help, do not read on.

Ah, it's that time of year again. Cold winds outside, a roaring fire inside. Just the right atmosphere for getting cozy with a good adventure game. So, draw your chair a little closer to the fireplace, while Fred pours your favorite drink. Now, all you need is that adventure, so just... make a wish.

So, here you are, a grubby little postal clerk, staring at the sky and wishing for better things. Considering that you work for a twit like Mr. Crisp, I don't blame you. However, if you don't get back inside and pick up that strange letter, nothing much will be happening, so you better hop to it!

On the other hand, you have some time to deliver that mysterious missive, so use it to good advantage. Explore the town and its environs carefully. Look everywhere, making your own map if need be (even though a nice one comes with the game). Things are going to change pretty soon, and you don't want to miss anything!

Of course, you can't go very far until you get past that rotten little dog (I cheerfully admit I tried kicking it, but that didn't work...sigh). So, while you think of something to do, why not take a stroll through that delightful cemetary; it might even prove helpful!

Once past the dog, you shouldn't have any problems for awhile (at least not until you come out of the Magick Shoppe). Just keep in mind that postal carriers also pick up mail as well as deliver it, and you should be ok. When you finally do get to the Shoppe, you'll meet a pretty wierd old lady, but don't let that scare you. She's pretty nice, and even offers you a gift. I'd accept it, if I were you.

When you leave, you find that somehow things have changed a bit. There's a lot of fog around, but that shouldn't bother you, after all, you made a map of the way up, right? (Well, I hope so, anyway!) Then again, maybe you'd prefer to stay in the fog, since there's that vulture sitting on a branch at the bottom of the hill. Lucky for you, you don't have to worry about that (but it sure is creepy).

You realize things have changed a LOT when you try to cross the bridge and find a nasty creature there demanding payment first (sounds like a troll bridge to me!). Anyway, you do need to get over to the other side, so you better give him something.

So now you can enter Witchville. Huh? WITCHVILLE??? Hmmm, maybe that nice old lady wasn't so nice, after all! Look what she's gotten you into here. You better check this out, cause things aren't the way you remember them from before! There certainly wasn't a piranha in the town fountain last time you looked. And there sure weren't any boots patrolling around to pick up curfew violators, either. Not to mention, the tiny poodle has somehow grown into a full-fledged hellhound! And what's that sinister castle doing there where the post office used to be?

Never fear, you can get through it, and without using any wishes. In fact, you can only get a perfect score by NOT using any wishes to get past obstacles. So, what can you do? Well, it would be wise to avoid the patrols for now, while you go around the town and see how much has been changed. Don't forget the areas outside of town too, such as the lake, among others. You will find a creature in need of help. What a platypus is doing in this place, I won't even attempt to speculate on, but it would be nice to get it out of the hole. It can't jump, but it can climb, if only it had something solid to grip.

Now, what are you going to do with that whistle? Well, what is usually done with them? Aha! That should help you a lot on your quest (the things you have to do to rescue a cat...). And after that would be a good time to visit the town jail. You can let yourself be picked up by the boot patrol, or walk in the door. Either way, you will soon find yourself in a cozy (?) cell.

Actually, the accomodations are not all that thrilling, and you really don't want to stay here too long. Take a gmood look around at everything, and don't be afraid to exert a little force if need be. And make sure you don't leave empty-handed. Then it's off to the Grue lair (and if you don't know where that is, you haven't been looking very hard!).

Ever wonder what Grues keep in their refrigerators? Why not open it and find out? Hmmm. Well, perhaps you should do something about baby Grue first, 'cause Momma Grue is NOT someone you want to meet! If you could just figure out some way of keeping the baby from being bothered by the light, you'd be ok. Well, you can't cover the light, so...

Continued on pg. 53

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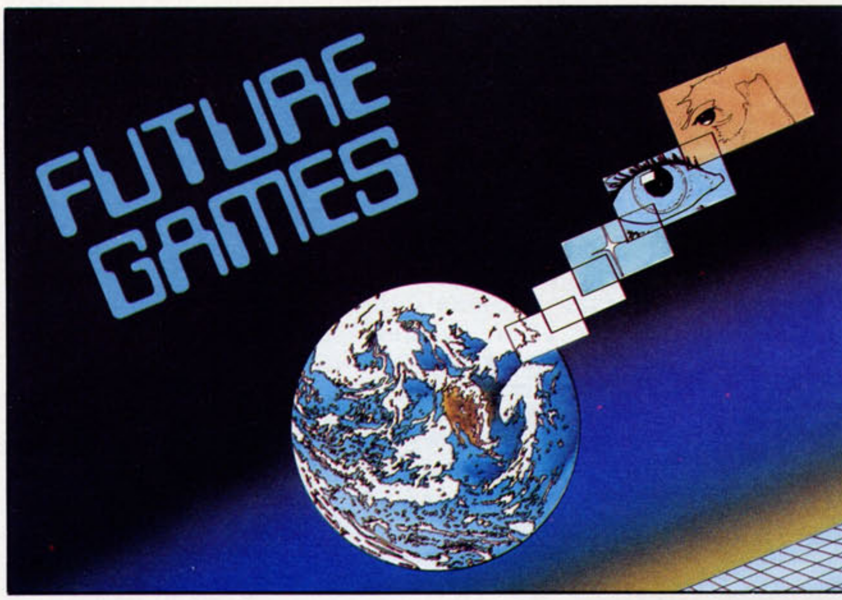
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by
William H. Harrington

History may recall that modern computer gaming began in 2001. The movie, mind you, not the year! It all began innocently enough when HAL, the schizophrenic computer, casually asked astronaut Dave Bowman, "How about a nice game of chess?" If the author of 2001, Arthur Clark, didn't foresee the personal computer, he certainly imagined the personal computer game.

We've come a long, long way since HAL and 2001. The personal computer has been transformed by a legion of dedicated gamers and talented programmers into, among other things, the "ultimate" game machine. With the beginning of the personal computer revolution in the mid 70's, dedicated programmers began to explore the possibilities of electronic games on the first generation of personal computers and created the likes of "Star Trek" and "Hunt the Wompus" on early 8-bit home-brew systems. With the appearance of such popular and affordable home systems as the Apple II, C-64 and Atari computers, computer gaming became a sizable segment of the software industry.

As we begin to exhaust the capabilities of the older 8-bit computers, a new generation of personal computers is bursting upon the scene. Three new so called 32-bit computer systems best exemplify the new technology. Apple's innovative **Macintosh**, Atari's new **ST** or "Jackintosh", and Commodore's much touted **Amiga** are each poised to turn the personal computer into something approaching the ultimate game machine.

But what is next? After all the perilous dungeons we've explored, hair-raising adventures we've shared and endless lost weekends enthralled in "monster" strategy games, where do our computers take us next? We can't buy them yet, not for any price, these computer games of the future that fire the imagination and stagger our senses. For now they exist only in the minds of their creators. Come join us as we explore this exciting new world with some of the "stars" of computer gaming.

Richard Garriott (aka Lord British), originator of the acclaimed *Ultima* series of fantasy role playing games, sees the **development** of an ongoing evolution, **driven** not by hardware or software professionals, but **by the consumers**. Three or four years ago the software industry was heavily influenced by arcade games. The appeal was in speed, flashy graphics and sound -- that was the first "boom" product. "Then", Richard says "they began to demand more!".

This second "boom", as Garriott refers to it, was fueled by the first games to use the unique capabilities of computers: adventures (interactive games). "Adventures introduced compelling dialog and in-depth plots", notes Garriott.

The *next* trend in computer gaming, according to Garriott, will be the design of games which synthesize the "compelling" aspect of good adventure games with greater realism through the use of extensive graphics and in-depth content. Garriott maintains, "all of the user's senses will be involved, the player will be lost in the game."

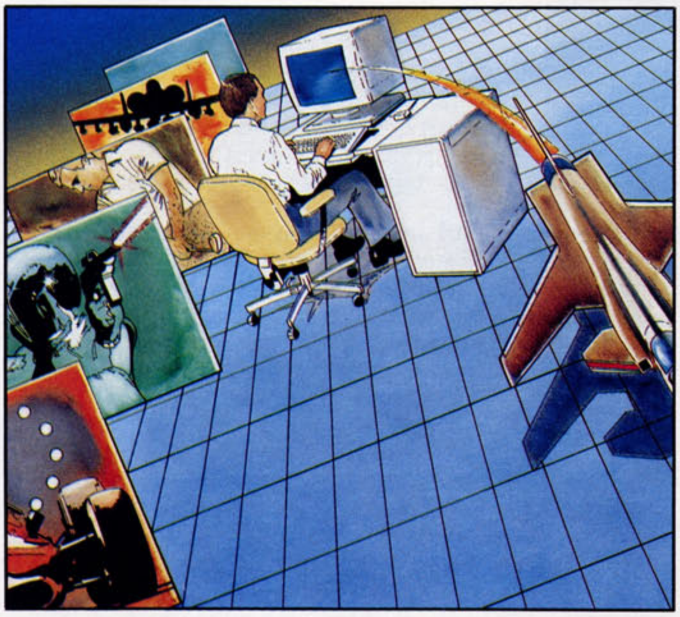
For the creator of Ultima, tomorrow's 32-bit computers offer one overriding advantage: *more memory*. But they also offer some mixed blessings. "Memory size offers new vistas. With a Macintosh for instance, speech could become part of the interface", muses Garriott. But advanced ultra hi-res graphics are another matter. Dealing with a hi-res graphic screen is a problem. As the speed of interaction on the screen is increased, the enhancement can be 'lost' in the hi-res clutter created by too much color and action on the screen. "16 bits are adequate", he maintains.

Another growing trend, in Garriott's view, is the necessity of team programming. As the computer hardware becomes more complex, and gamers demand ever more elaborate games, the resulting programs become increasing intricate and time consuming. Adds Garriott "*the lone programmer is becoming a vanishing species*." He ought to know. By his own admission *Ultima III* required a year of almost constant labor to create. The shortly to be released *Ultima IV* has taken over two years to develop! But then, even Michelangelo had help with the Sistine Chapel!

Like Garriott, **Chris Crawford** (Eastern Front, Legionnaire) feels that a case could be made for text adventures as the "next big thing" in computer games. However Crawford objects to the term *interactive fiction*. "Rubbish", he maintains; "a player participates in a text adventure not one whit more than in a regular novel." The problem as Crawford sees it is in the ability of the players to exercise their own free will. Presenting a player with several choices, "all but one of them wrong", doesn't allow the player to participate in the solution. You "discover" it by trial and error. The computer doesn't truly interact with the gamer according to Crawford.

In the future Crawford sees "interaction" as playing a key role in computer games. "The essence

of any good computer game lies in the interaction between the player and the computer. In a true interaction, the reactions get all mixed together and a completely new term enters the equation: *anticipation*. Each actor acknowledges the other's existence as a sentient being by anticipating that actor's reaction to his own behavior. This process of anticipation and counter-anticipation can iterate endlessly, creating situations of profound depth and subtlety."



Crawford sees the future of computer games in *interaction through anticipation.* A future he does not think will happen soon. "Three years ago the games industry had enough money to experiment liberally and it blew the opportunity in its mad rush for the next Pac-Man. Nowadays", he continues, "with companies struggling to survive, the money isn't there for bold experiments and innovative games." Crawford even admits to backing off from his more ambitious game designs in favor of 'mere mortal games' to make a living.

Just to complete his iconoclastic view of the industry Crawford feels that graphics, sound, color and animation have ". . . no important role in the future of computer games." For Crawford the "gee whiz" aspects of computer games, as he calls them, have few charms. He leaves us rather with one final thought: *people, not things*. Computer games have always concentrated on things. You shoot things, chase things, avoid things, capture things, but never encounter any real people. The games of the future " . . . will necessarily shift their emphasis away from things and towards people."

Since the dawn of digital computing in the 1940's computer scientists dreamed of computers that could play chess. During the 60's and early 70's the mainframe fraternity, using millions of dollars of exotic hardware and countless thousands of hours stolen from more mundane tasks, took up the quest. But it took a young couple from San Diego, **Kathy and Dan Spracklin**, to take computer chess from the laboratory to chess lovers everywhere. Their creation, *Sargon*, was not the first chess program on a microcomputer, but it was the first to play a good game of chess in a reasonable time. That was enough!

"There is only one problem with Sargon", Kathy Spracklin muses; "it plays better chess than most of the people who play it". While a small segment of the chess community urges ever more challenging versions of Sargon, the Spracklins look instead to "service the average user". "What we want to offer are more features", she continues, "extended libraries, onscreen chess clocks, that sort of thing". For the Spracklin's chess is a full time job: working for Fidelity (the manufacturers of dedicated chess games) and updating Sargon for Hayden Software. It isn't that the Spracklins wouldn't mind doing something else, but Sargon is never finished.

Looking back from when Sargon was first published in 1978, Kathy Spracklin saw the arcade style game with its emphasis on hand-eye coordination and fast reflexes "peek and die". In her own words, "There has been a gradual change to games requiring mental input such as word games and interactive fiction." In the future Kathy sees computer games that use the unique capabilities of the computer to enhance a child's education with games that are "goal oriented", games that teach reasoning as well as entertaining the player.

As for the impact of the next generation of personal computers, Kathy cautions "there must be enough machines in the market for software developers to support." The Spracklins' found that creating the *Macintosh version of Sargon III* opened up some new opportunities. "The mouse on the Macintosh and its pull-down windows enabled us to add many more features to the program without increasing its complexity." She looks forward to extensive use of window technology in adventure type games. With multiple windows on the screen there are things you can now do that you just couldn't do before, such as completely integrating text and graphics without resorting to split screens.

For the game industry to capitalize on the new technology she warns there must be a major marketing effort to reintroduce the consumer to computer gaming after the "arcade game collapse", as she calls it. "People just went from games to spreadsheets; but they can come back just as quickly" she maintains. And just what is her favorite game (excepting Sargon)? *Frogger* she confessed.

Mark Cantor and **Jay Fenton** of **Micromind** have quickly gained a reputation for innovation and imagination on the Macintosh including such programs as *MusicWorks* and *VideoWorks*, proving that the Mac can play something else besides JAZZ.

Full screen cellular animation is possible with the new technology, Cantor feels, opening the door to graphic effects that rival the very best that the Disney Studios produced during the "golden age" of animation in the 1930's and 1940's and at a fraction of the time and cost. Imagine for a moment the equivalent of "Fantasia" coming soon to a computer near you!

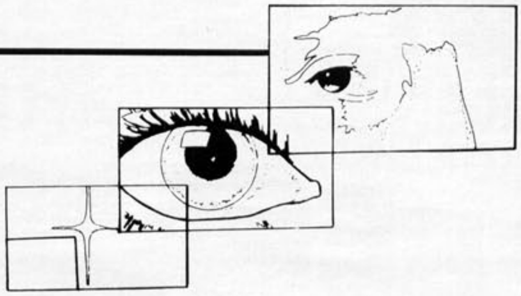
Some people hold that interactive video is the future of computer gaming. These colorful, iridescent and nearly indestructible disks have already brought reliable audio-video storage to the mass consumer electronics market. Instead of conventional magnetic "heads" that travel over the surface of a floppy or hard disk, video disk drives would use low power lasers and polarized light to "read" the surface of a laser disk. Their potential for the personal computer is truly staggering. A single 5" laser disk can easily store over 500 megabytes of data! Yet, surprisingly, interactive video has few charms for Cantor. "The problem with interactive video, in arcade games like *Dragon's Lair*, is that they're just too slow accessing the disk; the action and reaction must be immediate or the game doesn't work!" These computer controlled video disks, or CD ROMS as they are sometimes called, may have a *different* role in Marc's view of future computer gaming. "They potentially can store enough data to create true, interactive comic books", Cantor muses, and goes on to see both Apple's Macintosh and Commodore's advanced Amiga computer as capturing a significant share of the future entertainment market.

Roe Adams, a columnist with with Computer Gaming World has worked as a game reviewer, writer, and columnist in almost every facet of the computer entertainment industry. And as one of the industry's most noted game designers and consultants, he has worked on more than a few of your favorite games. He has strong opinions. "Right now there exists a 12-inch abyss between the keyboard and the monitor. The games player feels no relationship between himself and what occurs on the screen. In the future, computer game designers will have to bridge that abyss. The effect will be to create a realistic 'you are there' feeling in the software. The player will be totally swept up in living the adventure." Such a fantasy "world" would have a depth and an immediacy that might rival reality. Perhaps future gamers, Walter Mitty like, might come to live for their "games" and escape from the work-a-day world in a computer generated fantasy.

The computer hardware that will most influence the immediate future of computer games is the *plasma display*. This is state of the art, and still very pricey technology, which uses several layers of ionized gas trapped between layers of glass. An electric current then travels along an almost microscopic grid of fine wires producing a pixel, or dot, composed of glowing gas, at any location on the screen. The result is ultra sharp resolution thin screen displays with vivid color. Plasma displays are rumored to be the color display system that Apple may eventually incorporate in the Macintosh. While Adams sees considerable potential for laser disk technology and personal computers, he predicts that the price will have to be "about $99.00" before they can become a viable mass market medium.

DR. CHANDRA, WILL I DREAM?

The computer games of the future, it seems, are as much art as science. And like art they seemingly



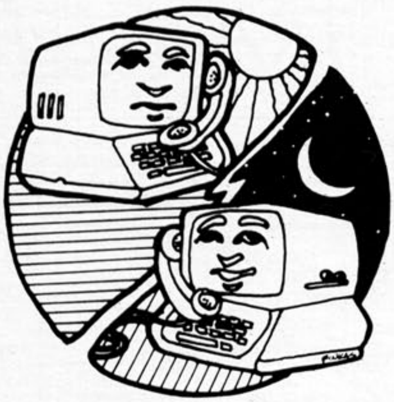
have more to do with the imagination and creativity of the artist then the medium, the electronic canvas, they come to life upon. Future computers may give the programmer greater freedom and range, but the real limits may lie with the author, not the machine. Still we can imagine what they might be like, these future games.

We are already seeing the beginning of the future in adventure gaming. Games of interactive fiction will be written by not one inspired programmer but by the collective efforts of teams of writers, designers and programmers. Mixing text, ultra high resolution graphics and multiple windows, these games would communicate with sophisticated, full sentence parsers and employ a full range of appropriate sound effects. With smooth, flicker free animation and three dimensional perspectives the gamer would be drawn into his or her own very "personal" adventure.

Strategy or war games might simulate a battle or campaign on several levels. Perhaps the gamer wishes at first to conduct the game on a strategic level, ordering vast armies or fleets across continents and seas. Then at the stroke of a key or a spoken word, the General becomes a Private in a squad, taking some small part in the larger battle. Instead of clumsy hexagonal grids borrowed from conventional board games, ultra high resolution color displays with multiple windows provide panoramic views from any perspective that can quickly zoom in or out. Again, orders and commands are through natural language. Real-time action-packed graphics are simulated with true full screen cellular animation that rivals the best efforts of the wizards of Lucas Films. Characters speak and gesture to you, on the other side of the screen. Instead of the crude audio output of today's games hi-fidelity digital sound brings another dimension to the gaming experience, from the rattle of musketry at Waterloo to the roar of Rommel's panzers at El Alamein.

Or perhaps there will be games that we can't imagine, new games that defy conventional labels, games that will go on to explore new dimensions in computer entertainment.

One thing is certain, the future of computer gaming is more than the evolution of computer hardware and software. The human dimension of gaming will surely change as well. Games are as old as man and his need to learn and relate to his world or to escape from it. Yet as our games become more sophisticated the computer becomes more than a passive entertainment instrument such as the television or radio. Rather the computer becomes an *imagination machine* that creates and shares a fantasy world that we truly live in and experience. A world unique to each player, both man and machine. Imagine that!



TELE-GAMING

HOW TO TELEGAME

Patricia Fitzgibbons

During the past two years, I've received many letters from CGW readers who've requested basic information about telegaming. For the rest of you who haven't written to me -- and are still wondering what the heck online gaming is all about -- here is a list of readers' ten most commonly asked questions, and my answers.

1) WHAT IS TELEGAMING?

"Telegaming" is an activity in which you use your computer, modem, and telephone to connect with another computer and play games online. The remote ("host") system can be a huge mainframe or a small personal computer; in either case, you are allowed to access game programs that reside on that system.

2) WHY SHOULD I TRY TELEGAMING?

Since you are reading this magazine, you already have a special interest in computers and games. Telegaming is simply another aspect of that exciting combination, another step toward the high-tech entertainment frontier. And it's a great way to meet new friends while you're having a lot of fun.

3) HOW DO I GET STARTED?

You need a computer or terminal, a modem, a private telephone line, and telecommunications software. Most computer manufacturers recommend modems for your machine. Ask for information on popular brands and price ranges at computer stores or user group meetings, and check computer magazines for reviews of terminal software to accompany your hardware configuration.

4) WHICH SYSTEMS OFFER ONLINE GAMES?

Here are the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of seven telecommunications services that offer online games. Write or call for more information.

COMPUSERVE, 5000 Arlington Centre Blvd., Columbus, OH 43220, 800-848-8199 or 614-457-8650.

THE SOURCE, 1616 Anderson Rd., McLean, VA 22102, 800-336-3366 or 703-821-6666.

PLATO, Control Data Publishing Co., P.O. Box 261127, San Diego, CA 92126, 800-233-3784 or 800-233-3785.

DELPHI, 3 Blackstone St., Cambridge, MA 02139, 800-544-4005 or 617-491-3393.

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The Japanese have a word for it...

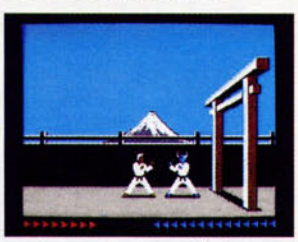
空手家

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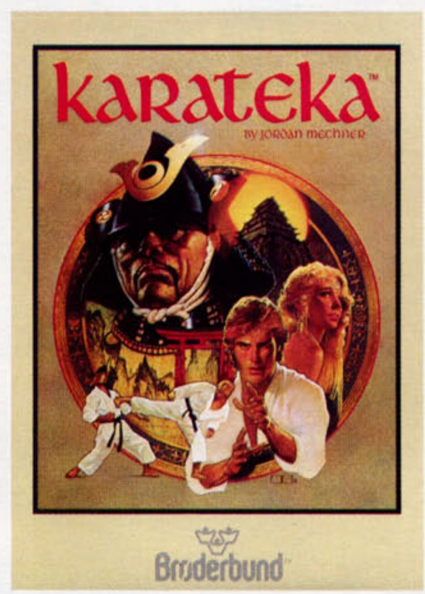
THE MAKING OF KARATEKA.



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Roy Wagner

THE BRITISH ARE COMING

In Great Britain, as well as most of Europe, the C64 is a very popular for both business and gaming. This is due to it's low cost and extensive capabilities. Most game software is released on cassette. This does limit such games because they must be loaded entirely into computer memory. Loading however is NOT slow and can even be as "fast" as the 1541 since nearly all cassette software uses fast loading code. They fully load C64 memory in 2 minutes.

Cassette and some disk software from England are being introduced into the US market at about $10 by several distributors. Typically each is worth the price and matches or surpasses the quality of some software from major US companies at 2 to 3 times the price.

The games offer arcade like challenges at several levels of difficulty. The graphics are fast and well done. Themes are similar to several classic US favorites (Jumpman, Ft. Apocalypse), yet different enough to still be fun. These are games you play persistently for several days and then go on to something new.

I looked at *Henry's House* from English Software (my favorite with 8 rooms to get through), *Choc A Bloc Charlie* from Lothlorien, *Killer Watt* and *Loco*(motive ed.) from Alligata, and 1985 - *The Day After* from Mastertronic. The latter is one of several on disk from this company for $9.95 in a nice vinyl folder.

BEACH-HEAD TOO MUCH

The latest release from Access is a sequel to *Beach-Head*, the game that put you alone against a formidable fortress. The only good thing I can say about this one is that it has a one or two player option. The game is excessively violent with the only thing missing being the blood and guts. It gives us the screams, moans and cries for the medics. Even the quality graphics of previous titles from Access are missing. I hope this one dies quickly on the shelf.

To Access credit, I highly recommend their fast load cartridge *Mach 5* as well as Epyx's *Fast Load*. Both work well and offer several additional features. Early releases of the latter had various problems that have now been corrected. If you think yours may have a problem, call Epyx first before returning it.

GET YOUR ENGINES RUNNING

Available for the auto racing circuit are some new titles. *On-Track* from Gamestar is off the track as to what makes a good race car game. This style of game was left behind years ago. *Hot Wheels* from Epyx isn't so hot. It is geared for the younger crowd of about seven. *Racing Destruction Set* from Electronic Arts crosses my finish line every time. It offers an extremely comprehensive game package: nine vehicles (Baja bug, Can-Am and Indy racer, stock car, dirt and street bike, pickup, jeep, lunar rover) each with customizing options and 50 popular tracks (with jumps and pavement types) and the option to create your own. For added excitement you can change gravity and place land mines or oil slicks. You get great graphics and plenty of action.

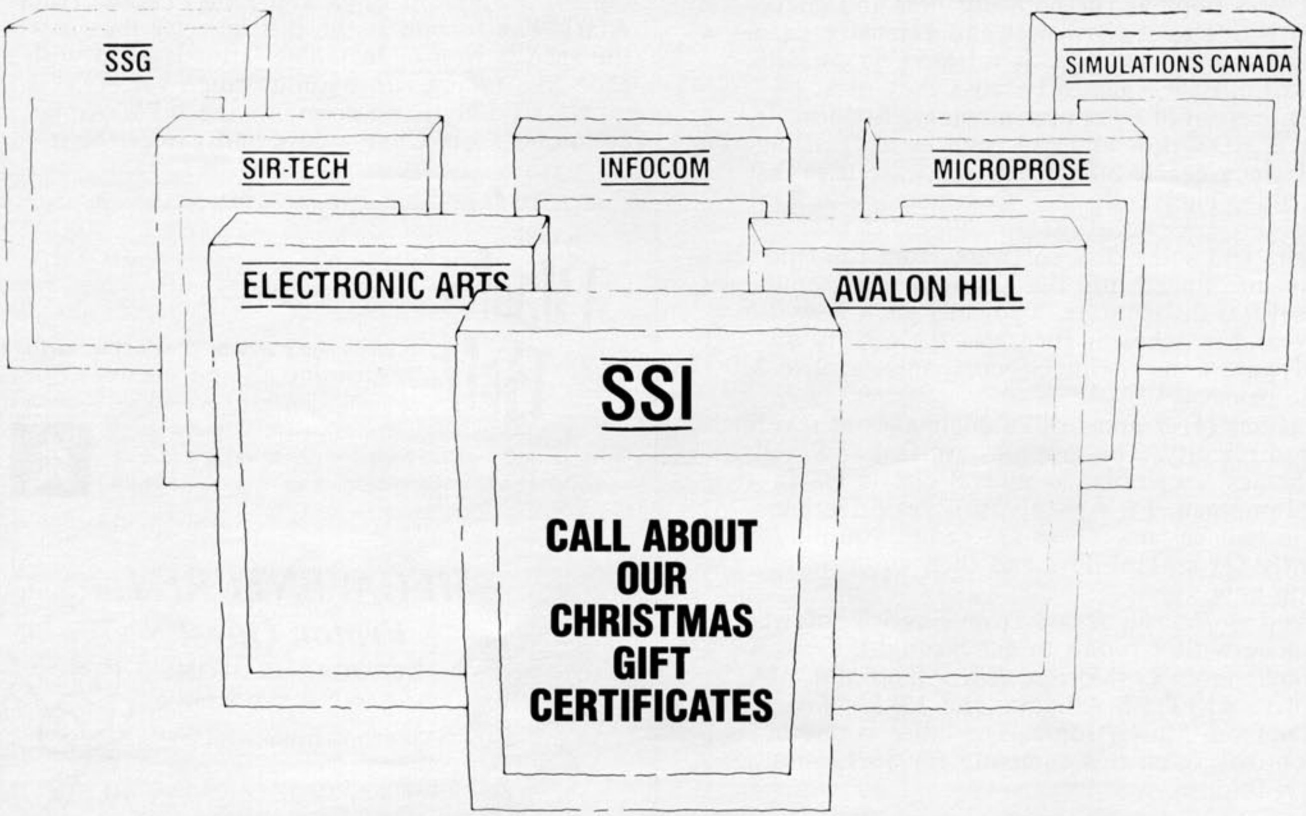
Other contenders that entered the race long ago are *Pit Stop* from Epyx and *Pole Position* from Atari. The former is the pits because that is where the race is won or lost. The latter is good with arcade like racing fun without much variety.

NEXT ISSUE we'll review the NEW Amiga computer from Commodore and games for it.

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SIMULATIONS CANADA	LIST PRICE	OUR PRICE	Apple	Atari	Commodore	IBM
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Grey Seas, Grey Skies	$60	$40	•		NEW	
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SIR-TECH	LIST PRICE	OUR PRICE	Apple	Atari	Commodore	IBM
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Jupiter Mission 1999	$50	$33		•	$23	
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Under Fire	$60	$40	NEW			

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SSG	LIST PRICE	OUR PRICE	Apple	Atari	Commodore	IBM
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ETC.	LIST PRICE	OUR PRICE	Apple	Atari	Commodore	IBM
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ST OUTLOOK

David Stone

In the last issue of this column I chided Atari for slow delivery of production models of the 520ST -- Atari's 16/32 bit, 512K personal computer. Since then, things have picked up. With over 500 retail outlets now selling the 520STs, the machines are getting into the hands of users. And, if the electronic bulletin boards are any indication, new owners seem to be genuinely excited about the ST and awed by its power and speed.

Just as the STs were being delivered to computer stores, Commodore announced that it was ready to go into production on the Amiga -- its 16/32 bit personal computer. The media hype for the machine was extraordinary. From all accounts, it appears to be an ST with an extra voice, sprite graphics, slightly slower speed, and almost twice the price.

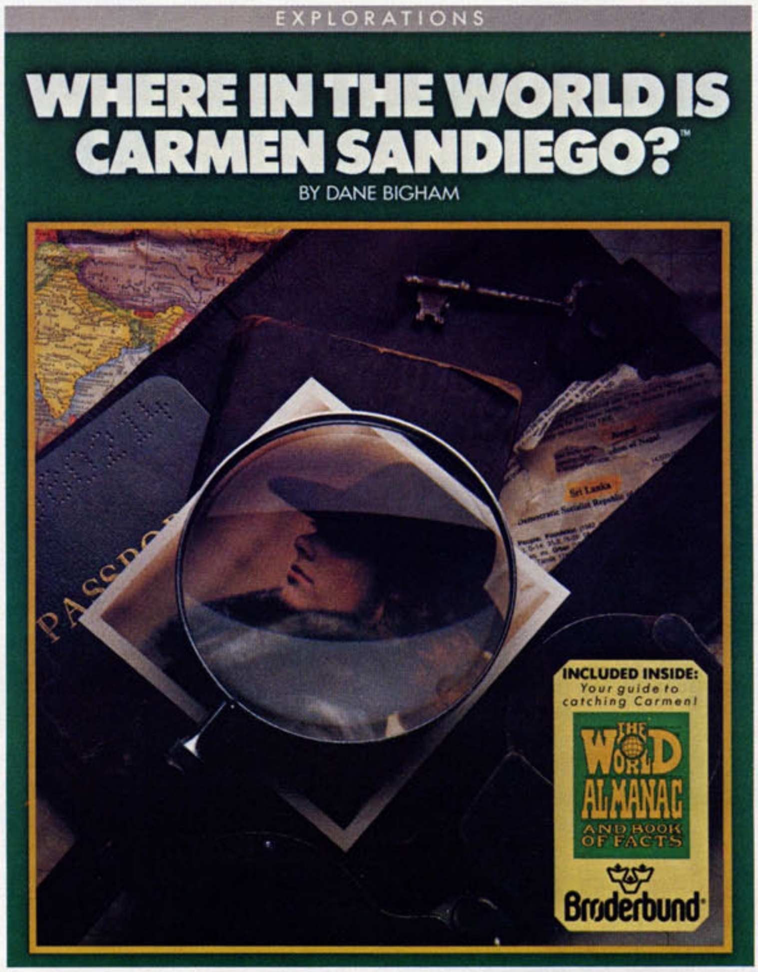
The 520ST and Amiga appear to have been built with two different design philosophies. Ironically, the ST's design philosophy seems similar to the original Apple II in that it optimizes the power of the machine's central processor and input/output operations. According to Atari, the ST's floppy disk (one of the most important I/O operations) is faster than the IBM PC/AT harddisk! The ST has been designed to allow, even encourage, development of third party expansion peripherals. The input/output ports exist for easy add-on of super high speed devices such as co-processors, harddisk drives, or you name it. Amiga, again ironically, seems to have more in common with the design philosophy of the Atari 800 -- built in bells and whistles, slower input/output, and somewhat less conducive to expansion.

In line with a design philosophy of providing the flexibility to grow and adapt as technology changes, word is already out that Atari plans the release of a true 32-bit bit add-on co-processor that will plug right into the 520 ST. Atari claims that this new processor will speed up the computations to one "megaflop" -- that's one million float-

Continued on pg. 50

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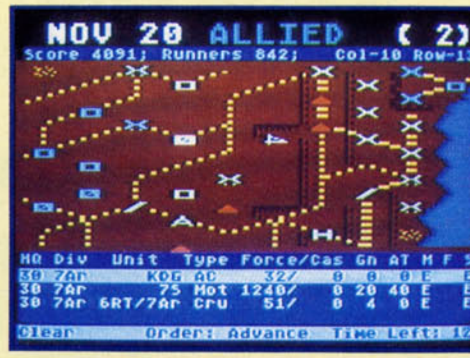
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ROMMEL

BATTLES FOR TOBRUK

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The Bard's Tale

THE BARD'S TALE

Name:	The Bard's Tale
Type:	Adventure
System:	Apple (initially) C-64 (November)
#Players:	One
Price:	$44.95
Author:	Interplay Productions
Publisher:	Electronic Arts 2755 Campus Dr. San Mateo, CA 94403

by Scorpia

Skara Brae. Once a pleasant and bustling town, now the desolate haunt of terrible monsters. By day and by night, bloodthirsty creatures roam the streets, or lurk within empty buildings, ready to pounce on the helpless or the unwary. Few people live here now. Indeed, most of the inhabitants have fled; only the temple priests, a few tavern-keepers, the Review Board, Garth the armorer, and Roscoe the Mage, remain. And high up in his tower, Mangar, the wizard, directs the onslaught of evil that has brought Skara Brae almost to ruin.

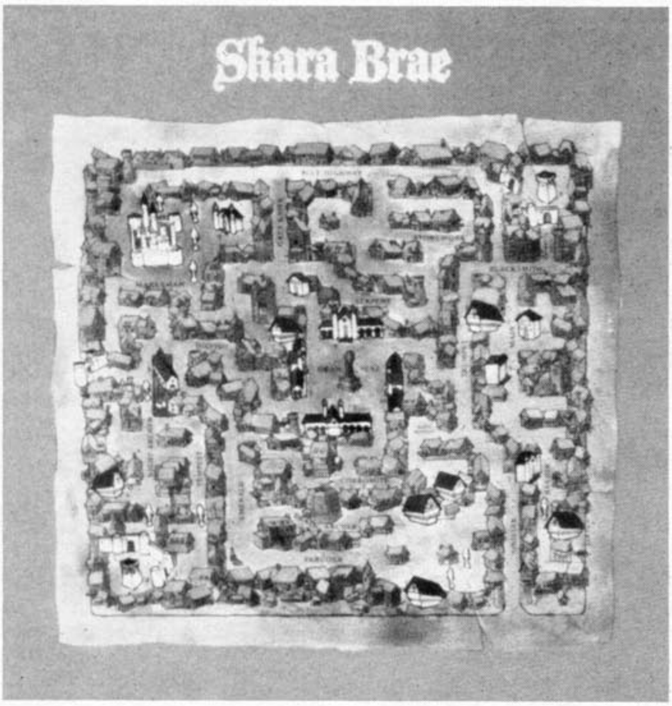
No red-blooded adventurer could resist this challenge! So you stand in the Adventurer's Guildhall, looking over prospective companions. Around you crowd humans, elves, dwarves, gnomes, hobbits, half-elves and half-orcs. They are fighters, paladins, bards, rogues, hunters, monks, magicians, and conjurers. All are eager to join you in your quest, but you must choose your band carefully. It will take the right combination of fighting ability and magic to see you through to the end (of Mangar, we hope!).

Thus begins *The Bard's Tale*, Electronic Arts' latest entry in the computer RPG field. And a very good entry it is. There is enough in the way of monsters, dungeons, tricks, traps, puzzles, and mysterious magical goodies to keep you busy for quite some time! And for you cartographers out there, be prepared to do A LOT of mapping. The game has (not counting the town itself) five different dungeons with a total of 16 levels. Stock up on graph paper now...you'll be needing it (a supply of erasers will also come in handy).

Your first task is to create a strong enough group to survive the rigors of Skara Brae. As noted above, you have a wide variety of races and professions from which to choose. You might want to create several groups, testing them out until you have the right "mix" of characters. Of course, there is no one "perfect" group; all you want to do is find the one that works for you.

The characters come with money, but no equipment, so you'll have to take them along to Garth's (fortunately nearby) to buy a few things. Keep in mind that this game runs in real time, so it might be DARK when you leave the Guild. Nighttime is no time for you to be out there wandering around naked and unarmed. Especially since Garth is closed at night. If the sky is black when you leave the Guild, turn right around and go back in... fast! Then wait awhile, and check again. Keep doing that until it's daylight again. You'll live longer that way.

Once you've got the group equipped as well as possible, it's time to take a stroll around town.



Encounters will be fairly frequent, since monsters are roaming the streets. You can also find a few by kicking in the doorways of nearby houses. Sometimes they're empty, and sometimes, they aren't. Beginner parties might want to run if the monsters look too strong ("You face 6 Mad Dogs and 8 Berserkers"). Eventually, of course, your party will be strong enough so that encounters in the town itself are a piece of cake. When you reach that point, it's time to go underground and visit the delightful sewers, all three levels of them. These are the easiest dungeons in the game (just keep in mind that the lower you go, the tougher it gets!).

When you've finished with the sewers, it's time for the catacombs, and three more levels of fun and frolic for your stalwart group. All sorts of nasty undead things wander around down there, so be prepared and be careful. There's nothing like going through a door and finding yourself up against 66 Wights, or 99 skeletons (oops!).

Having survived that, you're probably about ready to tackle Harkyn's castle. Getting in is not all that easy; the grey dragon in front of the door may have something to do with it. Fortunately, there is a temple nearby where you can heal up any members of the party who got fried during the combat. Then it's up into the castle, to investigate the contents... living and not living.

Whew! It's getting tougher all the time, and you aren't finished yet. Now Kylearan's Tower awaits. It has only one level, but it's VERY tricky... and very nasty. Do your mapping here with the utmost of care. Use spells frequently to check on your position; you may not be where you think you are.

And now, at last, you are finally ready to take on the big boy himself. Of course, you'll have to find a way past the gates first. And then fight your way through five (count 'em, five!) levels of ingenious nastiness to reach Mangar for that final encounter. May the gods be with you at that ultimate moment!

Let's step back a bit now, and look at the actual game mechanics. The screen is divided into three squares or windows. The bottom half displays your party and their current stats. The upper left window shows a graphic representation of where you are or what you're fighting, and the upper right window is the combat screen. There is a gap between the upper two windows; here will appear little symbols that show you certain spells are in effect.

Movement is accomplished with the I-J-L keys, and K is used for kicking in doors. Viewing is three-dimensional; you see things as though you were really standing there, looking down a street or dungeon corridor. The graphics are very good, and disk access, for a game of this type, is at a minimum. There is even some minor animation in the monster pictures: heads turn, eyes move, hands open and close, dragons spit out fireballs.

Response time is FAST, both in moving and in combat. Results come as quickly as you can press the keys, and combat resolution is just as swift. You can also slow down or speed up the combat results, which is helpful when zapping a large group of monsters (like those 66 Wights).

The magic system is interesting; there are four classes of magic-users, but at the start, you can have only two, Magician and Conjurer. When these have gone up high enough in level, they can then switch class to Sorcerer and Wizard. It is possible (in fact, highly desirable) to have characters that know all the spells of all four classes. This is important for two reasons. One, you will need spells from all four categories to get through the game. Two, each time a magic-user goes up a level, he gets more hit points and more spell points. This includes starting over again in a new magic class. So, over time, magic users get to be pretty potent characters.

However, don't let that fool you. Some of those monsters are pretty potent, too. Red dragons, for instance, can fry you for 100+ hit points a shot, and it won't take many of those to wipe out even a very advanced party. No matter how good you are, you aren't immortal.

For you *Wizardry* and *Ultima* players, there is a little bonus: you can transfer your favorite charac-

ters over to the game from a Wizardry or Ultima character backup disk. The utility simply copies them over, leaving the characters on the original disk. I tried this with some characters from Knight of Diamonds, and it worked nicely. Of course, some of the magic items will be changed as the transfer is made; don't expect the characters to be decked out in KOD armor. Also, bishops and priests will become magicians, and mages will become conjurors. However, characters DO retain their stats, including hit points and levels of experience.

There are some other nice features to the game. No matter what happens to your characters: poisoned, paralyzed, petrified, insane, withered, level drained, or even dead, they can be made well again at a temple... for a stiff price, naturally. And Roscoe is available to re-energize magic-users, for a sufficiently outrageous sum. Finally, if worst comes to worst, and your group is all destroyed, or about to be, you can simply turn off the computer. As long as your group has been saved at least once at the Guild, they will still be there. So you can try again, although anything you found on that last expedition will not be with you.

One drawback to the game is the fact that you can't save it anywhere but in the Adventurer's Guild. Which means that you'll need to set aside some time when you want to play, because wherever you are, you have to get back to the Guild when you want to stop, or else lose everything you've done that time out. There is, however, a pause feature that will let you suspend play for short interruptions (such as answering the call of nature).

The Bard's Tale comes with three disks: Main Boot, Character, and Dungeon. Use the utilities program to make a couple of copies of the character disk. Use one copy to play the game, and the other as a backup in case of disk crash or other unpleasant things ("Rover, no, that's NOT a frisbee! Arggh!!"). A manual and command card are also included, and they contain enough information to get you off to a reasonably good start in the game. Make sure you read both of them carefully before you begin.

Also, while the game supports two drives for making a backup of the character disk, you can only use one drive when transferring or copying characters. If you are saving or transferring several characters, the disk swaps soon become tedious. However, since this review is based on an early, pre-production version of the game, this might have been changed, and the final version MAY support two drives for transfers/copies (but I can't guarantee that).

PLAYING TIPS

Now, it just wouldn't be right if, after telling

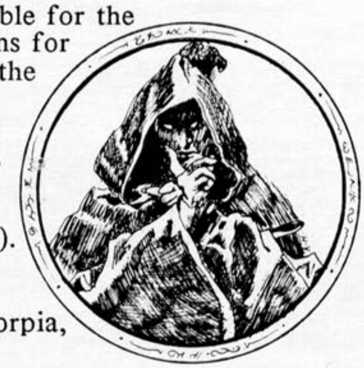
you about all the danger, I just left you hanging. So, here are some tips in the game to help you along and keep you alive. First, don't mess with those statues for awhile. Go up several levels, and then tackle them, leaving the golems and grey dragon for last, as they are the toughest. Magic points regenerate slowly during the day when you're in town (but not in dungeons!), so you can step inside a tavern and just wait there, doing nothing, letting the time pass and your spell points will come back (there are never any encounters in taverns or temples or Garth's or the Review Board, where you go to advance a level).

Absolutely, and without question, map EVERY single space in every dungeon. It may be tedious, but otherwise you are sure to miss something important, and you may not be able to finish the game. Also make note of the information you pick up from the bartender (after tipping him, of course), and you might want to keep track of which taverns are where; you never know what someone might ask you. And when you have a Sorceror of high enough level, make sure he calls in "Big Red", the illusionary red dragon. Sometimes the enemy may see through the illusion, but when they don't, Red can fry them in their tracks or claw them to shreds REAL quick! Just watch out he doesn't turn on the party...

Finally, one more thing about statues. They eventually come back again after you've killed them. However, they will stay "dead" for the duration of your current expedition, no matter how long that is; only after you've returned to the Guild and left the game are they restored. This is especially helpful when you're messing around in, say Harkyn's castle. You can leave, get your spell points regenerated at Roscoe's (open 24 hours a day), your party healed up at a temple (also open 24 hours), and then go back for more. Oh, and it's a good idea to cast any long-lasting spells just before you enter Roscoe's, so you can have more spell points left for the dungeons (and pssst! this isn't called the BARD'S Tale for nothing!).

I'll let you discover the properties of the various magical items yourself. There are some pretty nifty things waiting for you out there, and best of all, there are no cursed objects!

The Bard's Tale is available for the Apple II and IIe, and versions for the C-64 and Amiga are in the works. At this time, there is no word yet on versions for the Atari or Atari ST series, or the IBM PC (so write to EA and let 'em know you want it for YOUR machine!).



Bottom line:
Not to be missed!

Reader Service #42 ➤

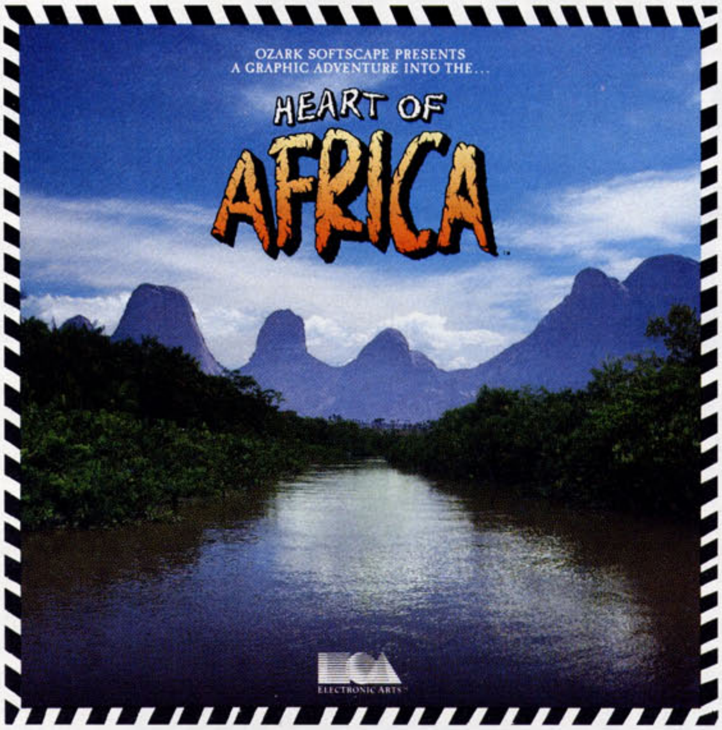
(Hi. I'm from Baltimore. Where's the pharaoh?)

A sequel to the Award-Winning Seven Cities of Gold.

Africa, 1890

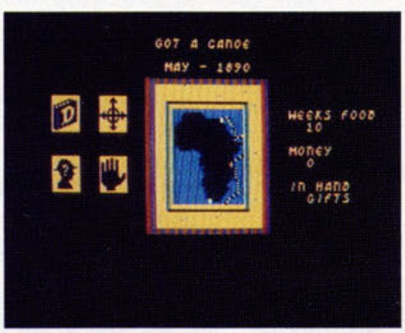
Up that river lies the African Adventure of your imagination.

The mysterious Dark Continent. Where the mighty Kilimanjaro towers over the Source of the Nile. Where the Congo snakes through steaming jungles and the scorching Sahara sun bleaches men's bones. Africa. Where legends of secret treasure drive men mad with desire. And where an adventurer can still find glory and gold... or a lonely death far from home.



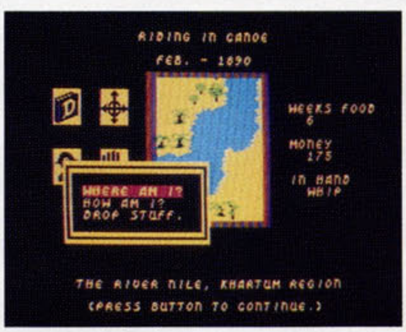
You have inherited a madman's diary ... and his dream to find the tomb of an ancient pharaoh.

Ancient songs still sung by tribal historians contain clues to the hidden tomb of a fabulously wealthy pharaoh. The madman's last feverish words drive you onward: "I now know it does exist. I am so close, but so near death. If you hear no more from me, then warn those that follow: this is not a journey for the weak of spirit or dull of mind. Come prepared."—H. Primm, May 21, 1889



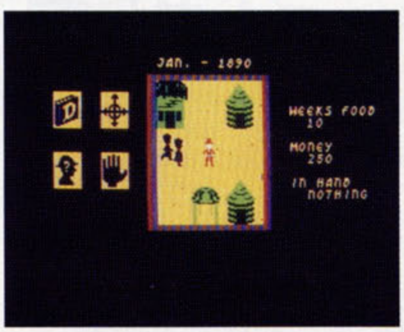
A Living Map of Africa

11 million square miles stuffed into your computer. Navigate 17 rivers. Hack through jungle and swamp. Sail to ten cities. Learn the ways of 22 tribes. Explore savannah, deserts and mountains. It's all geographically accurate.



Follow Your Dreams

Set your course and go for it. The computer automatically maps your progress and keeps your journal. If you get lost, it can tell you "The River Nile." What it won't say is "about to get sucked over the Kabelega Falls."



Decipher Native Clues

Local myths will help, if you can get the natives to talk. Enter their huts. Learn their customs. Pass out some bribes. The chief might tell you, "Look where the sun rises over the Childless Waters." Now try to figure it out.

ELECTRONIC ARTS™

Specifications: Available now for Commodore 64 & 128. Infinitely playable because the computer hides the tomb and treasure in new places each time you start. **How to order:** Visit your retailer or call 800-227-6703 for direct VISA or MasterCard orders (in CA call 800-632-7979). The direct price is $32.95. To buy by mail, send check or money order to Electronic Arts, P.O. Box 306, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019. Add $4 for shipping and handling. Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. All E.A. products purchased direct have a 14-day "satisfaction or your money back" guarantee. For a complete catalog, send 50¢ and a self-addressed envelope to Electronic Arts, 2755 Campus Dr., San Mateo CA 94403.

GAME OF THE YEAR

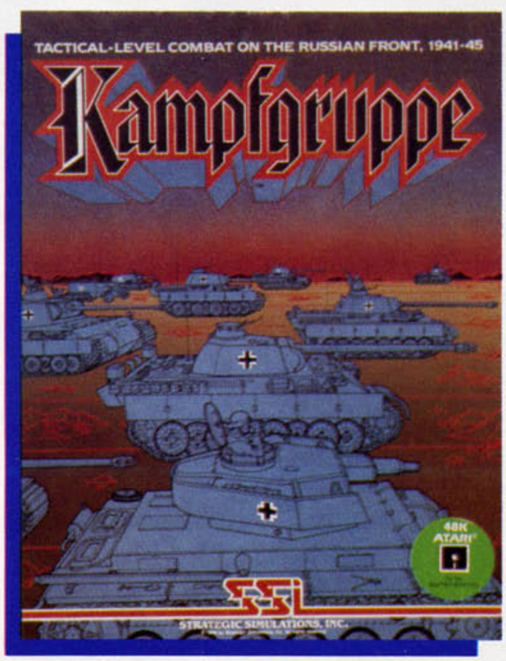
The ballots are in, the votes are counted. Here are the winners in the first annual *CGW Game of the Year Awards*.

From SSI we have the Wargame of the Year - *Kampfgruppe*. Lord British (Origin Systems) brings home a winner in *Ultima III*, the Adventure choice. *Seven Cities of Gold* (Electronic Arts) is discovered winning the Strategy game category. *F-15 Strike Eagle* strafes the competition to achieve Action Game of the Year for MicroProse Software.

And now for a blast of trumpets and a rolling of drums for the **CGW GAME OF THE YEAR - 1985.** *Kampfgruppe* by SSI! The voting was never very close and *Kampfgruppe* led "wire-to-wire".

Congratuations to all the designers and publishers of this year's winners.

Kampfgruppe



Kampfgruppe was an immediate hit in the *CGW* offices and our mail has consistently indicated very strong positive reactions by readers. It received the highest RID rating ever recorded for a wargame. In the contest, *Kampfgruppe* won by a fairly substantial margin over its closest non-wargame competitor - *Ultima III*.

We spoke with SSI President, Joel Billings, to get his views on *Kampfgruppe*'s success. "We were not surprised at the popularity. We felt at the time that it would be the best-selling wargame ever done by SSI", said Billings. His reasoning is that *Kampfgruppe* gives the feeling of miniatures for fans of that genre, while giving tactical gamers the most realistic computer simulation to date. The scale is popular (tactical), the setting is popular (WWII - Europe), the designer is popular (Gary Grigsby) and SSI knows how to package and market wargames. Joel also emphasized the random scenario generator, which makes for endless variety in fighting WWII land battles.

Boardgame players have long enjoyed complex tactical games. *PanzerBlitz*, by Avalon Hill, is probably the best-selling wargame of all time. The only real drawback to boardgames of this nature is the inherent complexity of items such as "line-of-sight" targeting and "opportunity firing". The computer is ideal for handling the "book-keeping" chores and allowing the gamer to concentrate on strategy. A fairly easy guess would be that we will soon see a large number of tactical games utilizing the general game mechanics pioneered by *Kampfgruppe*.

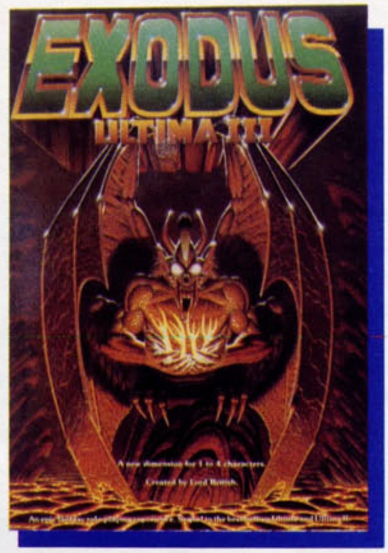
SSI stated that *Kampfgruppe* sales have reached the 8,000 unit mark, with an eventual mark of 25,000 expected. This is compared to the 100,000+ figures for the other winners in the contest. Despite the significantly smaller ownership of *Kampfgruppe*, it was able to easily win game of the year honors.

The staff at *CGW* feel that *Kampfgruppe* represents the finest wargame currently available and that it will be looked back upon as a true landmark effort in computer wargaming.

The hands down winner of the *CGW* Adventure game of the year was Ultima III, a worthy successor to Ultimas I and II. This fantasy role playing game was designed by Lord British (aka Richard Garriott) whose Ultima trilogy has remained on the best seller lists for the past several years.

Ultima III is much larger scope than either of the previous Ultimas and has set a standard of excellence which as of yet has not been surpassed. Ultima III was the first to introduce multiple characters that could explore a complete fantasy world with amazing freedom of movement.

Although *Ultima III* has been out well over a year, we feel that it is still the best game of its kind. And we anxiously await the upcoming *Ultima III* sequel, *Ultima IV*.





Our strategy game award winner has turned one particular city to thoughts of gold as *Seven Cities of Gold* (SC) has passed 100,000 units sales for Electronic Arts of Menlo Park, CA.

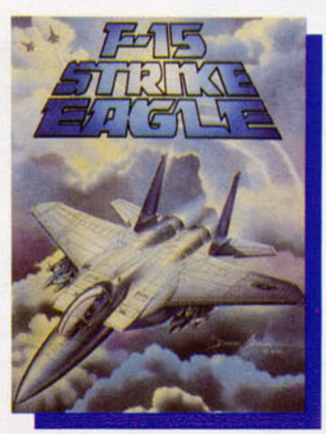
It is little wonder that SC has proven to be so popular. The incredible mapping procedure used in SC permits 2,800 different screens to exist on the map disk. Placed on a wall they would map a 10x20 foot map! In addition, the random continent generator makes this a game of endless variety.

Attention to detail is another hallmark of quality. The designers spent many hours researching the period of Spanish exploration and the game reflects their efforts. It is a *game,* but the all-important "feel" of authenticity is readily apparent.

Seven Cities is a **strategy** game, it is not a wargame. Our readers have stated that it is the best strategy game of 1985. We wholeheartedly agree.

The winner of the action game category is *F-15 Strike Eagle* by MicroProse Software. Again, the voting results are corroborated by sales figures: 100,000 units since the game was introduced in September 1984!

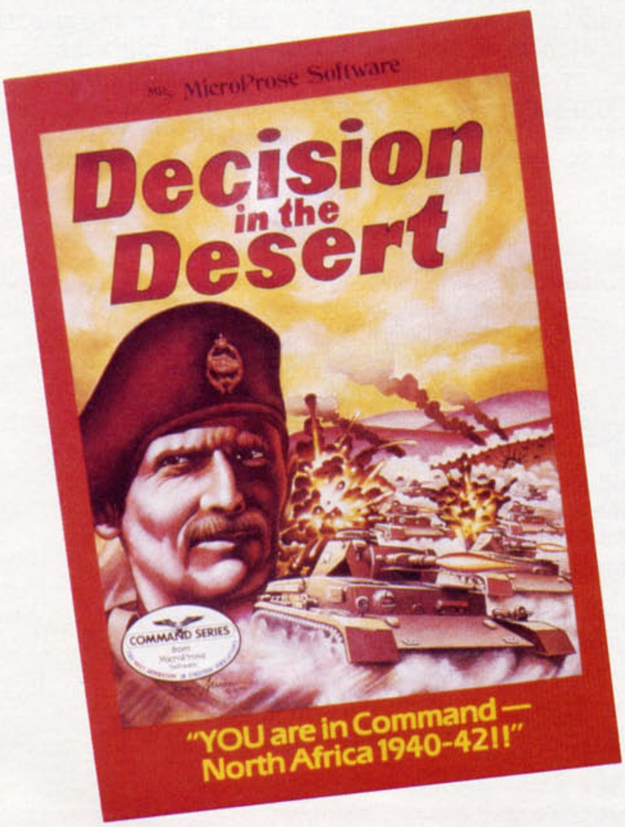
The reasons for *F-15*'s success are not hard to find. It is an extremely authentic representation of a modern combat aircraft. It retains much of the excitement of an arcade game, with arcade graphics, and yet it can also be enjoyed by a player looking for an accurate simulation. It is perhaps the prototype game for the arcade/simulation marriage.



Microprose's COMMAND SERIES

by M. Evan Brooks





The *Command Series* is Microprose's latest offering to the computer simulation hobbyist. *Crusade In Europe (CIE)* may well have been the hit of ORIGINS (the National Wargaming Convention) and is firmly entrenched in the software best seller lists. *Decision in the Desert (DITD)* is rapidly joining its predecessor. *CIE* covers the war on the Western Front during World War II, from the invasion of D-Day onwards to the collapse of the Third Reich. Design notes for this simulation have previously appeared in this magazine (cf. Jun-Jul 85); these comments apply equally to *DITD*. This review will encompass both simulations - their strengths, weaknesses, strategic/tactical considerations and overall conclusions. Be advised that although there are faults, these games are heartily recommended; at least one (if not both) belong on every wargamer's shelf.

DOCUMENTATION

Using Microprose's *Nato Commander* as a starting point, the designers (Sid Meier and Ed Bever) have greatly increased the options in order to achieve a user-friendly product. Upon opening the package the first thing to strike the user will be the professionalism of the documentation. Over fifty pages long in each game, it states succinctly how to play, and then details "How to Play Well". This latter instruction delineates basic strategic and tactical options in the first scenario of the appropriate product; for a novice (or even the more experienced gamer), the aid may well prove invaluable. It is a virtual stepping-through of the scenario, giving detailed analysis while leaving choice of the different strategic options to the player's expertise. This type of tutorial is needed in most wargames, and sadly lacking heretofore. Maps and historical analyses further elucidate the goal of the simulation; in addition, illustrations of militaria are interspersed throughout the booklet (e.g. shoulder patches of various units, insignia, combat badges, etc.). The single most impressive aspect of the documentation is the bibliography -- both general reading and technical references are present in profusion. It is gratifying to see a computer game designer finally giving credit to boardgame antecedents; numerous references are made to *Strategy & Tactics*' classic board wargames.

Name:	Command Series (Crusade in Europe & Decision in the Desert
Type:	Wargames
Systems:	C-64 and Atari
# Players:	1-2
Authors:	Sid Meir, Ed Bever
Publisher:	Microprose Software Hunt Valley, MD

Both *CIE* and *DITD* utilize a removable center insert which offers a strategic map (*CIE*) and a portrayal of a desert engagement on a small-tactical scale (*DITD*). This reviewer considered the map to be a much more useful centerpiece; however, one will discover that there were subtle reasons for *DITD*'s insert (cf. *Strategy and Tactics*, infra.). Both products also illustrate a terrain key. Taken from a monitor, it is fuzzy and not as professional as the rest of the package; an artistic touch-up would be beneficial. Despite this, the terrain on the display is clear enough that the player will not get confused.

Although not stated, the *Command Series* is rated as intermediate in complexity - easy enough for the beginner to grasp, but still challenging enough for the aficionado.

BEGINNING

The opening sequences of the *Command Series* are the best since *Summer Games*. As the spotlight pans a packed auditorium with a huge American (*CIE*)/British (*DITD*) flag in the background, the general marches out from the left to the center stage podium. As the strains of "Theme from Patton" (*CIE*)/"Tipperary" (*DITD*) begin, the General's speech scrolls up across the screen. Upon pressing the Start button, the player will be asked for the Code Word. Give the wrong code and the computer will reply "You are an enemy spy!"; the correct response will be answered by "Hello General". The correct codes are scattered throughout the rules book. Then the options begin. Five major operations are available in *CIE* (Normandy, Race for the Rhine, Market Garden, Bulge and the Campaign Scenario) with most operations offering numerous sub-variations. Altogether, 14 variants exist. *DITD* has five battles (Sidi Barrani, Crusader, Gazala, First Alamein and Alam Halfa). With sub-variations there are 11 variants with *DITD*. Upon deciding the scenario further options exist: speed slow-medium-fast, one or two player (or the computer playing itself), which side will you play (you can even switch sides during the game), full or limited intelligence, icons or military symbology.

THE MAP

The maps are readily recognizable as France, southern Britain (totally out of play) and portions of Germany with six-mile hex movement (*CIE*). *DITD* portrays the Western Desert, with three-mile hex movement. Terrain and geographic features, as well as military symbology, will be quite familiar to wargamers; the road network is well done. The overall effect of the terrain resembles a truly natural representation rather than a strategic or tactical playing field.

REAL-TIME PLAY

The *Command Series* runs in real-time. Microprose is proud of its real-time simulation concept. Time flows inexorably, and each unit is sequenced roughly every eight hours (*CIE*)/four hours (*DITD*). If the player finds time moving too fast he may slow the speed down or even freeze the action (this still permits one to issue orders and scroll throughout the map). Once every day supplies are distributed; during this period (midnight) nothing may be done. The main advantage to real-time is that a game may be saved at *any* time; but be sure to have a formatted disk available (the program will not allow you to pause and prepare one).

Given the scale of the games, this reviewer felt that the real-time worked best in *DITD*; actions at the regimental level were accessed in fifteen-minute increments, with little "wasted" time. *CIE* reflects divisional level activity, accessed in half-hour increments. While this worked well in the smaller scenarios, in the longer scenarios it sometimes seemed to drag. Overall, the real-time concept is more beneficial to a tactical-level game.

PLAY: AN INTRODUCTION

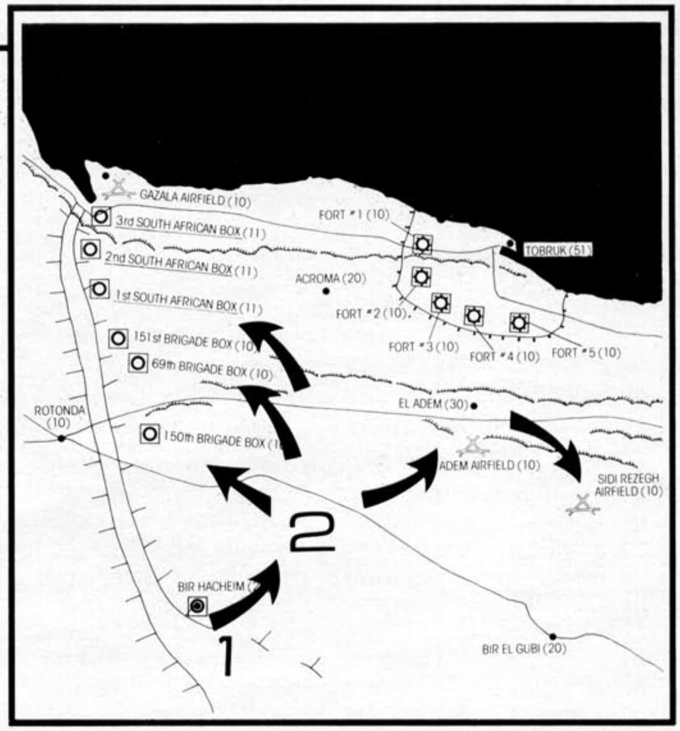
Either joystick or keyboard-driven, the mechanics of the *Command Series* are simple to master. It must be noted that this reviewer played the game on an Atari 800; because of memory limitations a playback of two weeks movement ("instant replays") is unavailable. It is available on both the Atari 800XL and the Commodore 64. The Commodore has an additional feature -- divisional commanders will be characterized by effectiveness/personality (e.g. "forceful and dynamic","not the best general on the field").

Basic mechanics have been covered in Dr. Bever's earlier article (CGW 5.3). This reviewer will delineate basic tactics and strategic options. The scenarios covered are the "Campaign Scenario" (*CIE*) and "Gazala" (*DITD*). In prefacing the Campaign Scenario, it must be noted that this is not the scenario the designers would have chosen for review. Its sheer length and volume stretch the ability of the computer to its limit (and sometimes beyond!). However, most experienced wargamers approach a new product by trying the simplest scenario, learning the mechanics and then jumping to the "monster" scenario. In *CIE*, the whole may well be less than the sum of its parts. Each individual scenario is a "close-run thing", with victory hanging in the balance until the end. In the European Campaign Scenario, victory against the computer opponent may be one-sided - but the scenario is reminiscent of the "Dancing Bear". The miracle is that it dances at all, not that it can't dance well.

PLAY: CRUSADE IN EUROPE (CAMPAIGN)

Playing against the computer Nazi, one will be hard pressed to break out during the first two weeks of June 1944. However, at Omaha Beach, when the 716th Static Division is forced back, the computer will usually leave a 30 mile gap in the lines. Pouring through the gap, the Americans should be able to encircle eight divisions around Avranches while the British encircle seven divisions around Caen to the Seine River delta. Despite a huge gap in the Allied lines, no Germans are available for exploitation. In fact, lack of supplies and continued attacks will annihilate the Germans within 7-10 days. After the elimination of 15 German divisions (c. 250,000 men), the Allies race everywhere; opposition is isolated and ineffectual. While the coastal ports do have garrisons, their lack of mobility dooms them to eventual extermination. In this game, Paris fell by 20 July, and by 20 August, the Allies had secured everything. But the game does not end! One still has to wait until 1 November. The lack of an automatic victory condition in the Campaign Scenario is sorely missed. Casualties were as follows: Allies -- 240,300 troops and 2,112 tanks; Germans -- 773,300 troops and 2,706 tanks. The Germans retained control of 257 towns, while losing 1,643 towns to the Allies. One final tactical hint for the Allies: beware of supply. In the Campaign Scenario on the first run-through, everything was captured and the German army annihilated no later than 1 September; the bulk of the American army had been sent to the Ruhr valley, whereupon they eventually surrendered due to lack of supplies -- despite the fact that the nearest potential German unit must have been a scout troop of *Hitler Jugend* marching through the Black Forest. The correct response is to do the minimum necessary to accomplish the task. Once the British have secured the coastal ports, put them into Reserve mode; similarly, use only a few American divisions for the long thrust. German strength is weak enough that the economy of force applies.

If the Allies had such an easy time of it, surely the real challenge must be the German opponent. Well, not necessarily true. Playing against a computer Eisenhower, this reviewer managed to prevent the Allies from penetrating as far as St. Lo. A line stretching laterally from St. Lo was buttressed by a second line 12 miles to the rear (i.e. two movement spaces); this second line had a six mile lateral separation between each unit, i.e. this permitted the front line units to retreat when necessary, not cause traffic jams and allow the reinforcing units clear access to the FEBA (forward edge of the battle area). Please note that it is difficult to withdraw DLIC (detachments left in contact); it can be done, but it will take longer than one may expect. At any rate, the Allies were held, and this reviewer went on the offensive against the British. By 11 August, Sword Beach fell; Juno fell five days later. Gold fell on 7 September; Omaha, 14 September; and Utah on 9 October. By game's end, the Allies were compressed into a 200 square mile area around Cherbourg. Casualties were as follows: Allies --



674,100 troops and 6,846 tanks; Germans -- 172,100 troops and 526 tanks. The Allies captured 42 towns, while the Germans retained control of 1,735 towns/cities.

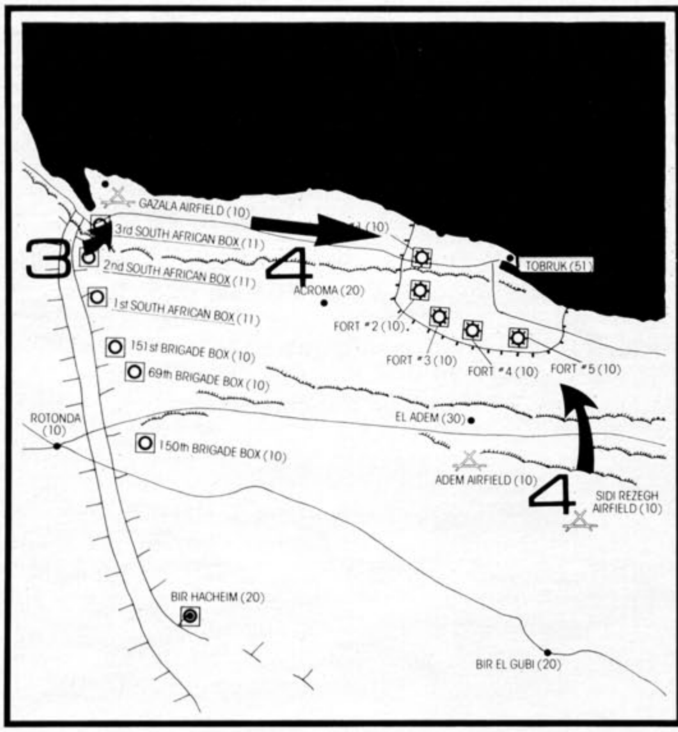
In fairness to the designers, it must be admitted that the Campaign Scenario taxes the computer to its limits. The smaller scenarios are closely-fought and tense to the last minute.

PLAY - DECISION IN THE DESERT (GAZALA)

"Gazala, Rommel's Finest Hour" simulates the battles occurring in the Western Desert between 27 May and 20 June 1942. As the Axis, the player must crush the British, by gaining at least 200 victory points. An automatic victory may be achieved by the capture of Tobruk, Gazala and the three South African boxes. (cf. map inset)

Ignoring the northern sector, the Afrika Korps will assault Bir Hacheim. (1) Historically, this position (held by elements of the Free French) was a difficult objective. In game turns, it falls relatively quickly. However, unless the player is careful, the entire Afrika Korps will soon expire in the desert due to lack of supplies. A forceful exploitation into the British rear will be met by a counter-thrust that will devastate the Axis.

What is the solution? If you cannot supply through the desert, then you must utilize the road network. The main road to the bulk of the Afrika Korps passes through British minefields (actually minefields plus platoon minus ambush elements). Therefore, after seizing Bir Hacheim and moving to threaten the 150th Bde box, the Afrika Korps must wait while the Italian army forces a channel through the minefields. The critical period arises now; while the Italians are clearing the minefields, the British will attack the isolated Afrika Corps. Judicious tactical employment, trading space for time and concentration of forces should defeat the



British in detail. When the minefields are cleared, the Afrika Corps is resupplied. (2) With the Afrika Korps ready to resume the offensive, elements will engage the British boxes from the rear. Simultaneously, splinter elements will race to El Adem and Sidi Rezegh. (3) Finally, a small force (c. 2 regiments) will penetrate the northern road, seize Gazala and drive on Tobruk. (4) Elements from Sidi Rezegh should drive north to Tobruk in a final pincer movement.

The most important consideration in Gazala (indeed all *DITD* scenarios) is the low density of units and the low manpower availability. Loss of a single regiment may prove disastrous; on the other hand, seeing numerous enemy units should not be overly disheartening. They may well be small recon forces of 1,000 men or less - no match for your hearty veterans of the Desert Campaign.

Losses in this scenario were as follows: British - 63,800 troops and 604 tanks; German - 10,500 troops and 56 tanks. The Germans achieved a total victory when Tobruk fell in mid-June.

SUPPLY

Supply is perhaps the weakest element of the *Command Series*. This "weakness" was in large part a conscious effort of the designers; they wished the player to act as the strategic/tactical field commander - without having to delineate supplies to each individual unit. One can sympathize with the designers on their abhorrence of detailed supply rules; playing G4/S4 (logistics) is not an exercise in playability and entertainment.

In effect, the supply rules are left for the player to learn. The documentation is complete, but implementation is a matter of educated guesswork. During the midnight allocation phase truck icons speed throughout the map, bringing supplies to all possible units. Given the speed at which the icons travel, it is difficult to determine which units are unsupplied until one can access them during regular play. Also, the longer scenarios require more time to allocate supplies. In *CIE*'s Campaign Scenario allocation requires c. one minute. Out of a playing time of 14 hours, three hours involve watching the computer deliver supplies (shorter scenarios require as little as 8 seconds).

Given the nature of the Desert Campaign, logistics were the prime mover. Logistics drove operations; insufficient logistics doomed the best operational plans to failure. Each scenario utilizes the supply rules in a different method; it is left to the player to determine the optimal use of supplies. While this can be learned, it is unrealistic to expect a Commander to be ignorant of the capabilities of his supply trains. But remember - familiarity does breed victory!

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

It should be noted that both games were played at the *fair* level; this default condition is historical parameters. However, given the nature of conflict simulations, as the designers have pointed out in private conversations, this default condition in effect penalizes the computer. Since the player learns each time he plays the game, his play will naturally improve; but the computer does not "learn" - it plays each game as if it were its initial effort. Therefore, to make play more exciting, consider the following alternatives:

(1) Play with Full Intelligence. After the first play, you will have a general idea of the location of enemy reserves. This is an unfair advantage, since the computer will not "remember" where your reserves are. By utilizing full intelligence for both sides this advantage for the player is negated.

(2) Play with a Handicap. Usually, handicaps involve mere alterations of strength. However, in the *Command Series*, the handicap adds to the effectiveness/morale of the computer's forces. This permits the computer to choose riskier strategies; where the computer would have normally refrained from an attack or a certain approach, it will now seize the initiative and continue longer than at the "fair" parameter. Also, this is the only way in which the player will be able to achieve the rank of "Supreme Commander".

Finally, some points about the other aspects of Artificial Intelligence.

Overrun units may reconstitute themselves as cadre units. However, while this may be realistic if they appear behind their own lines, in the *Command Series* they appear in the area of destruction -- even if that area is now 100 miles behind enemy lines. Thus, as the Allies, this reviewer was approaching Paris when a German unit popped up near Cherbourg ("Hey, G-2, I thought you said we destroyed that unit three weeks ago!"). As the Germans, this reviewer was not surprised to see Allied units popping up behind the German lines. But these units, without supply and with low efficiency (c. 30%) are targets of opportunity without risk. In effect, this aspect of artificial intelligence, while admittedly artificial, does compel the player to both seize and occupy key terrain.

If one is playing the Campaign Scenario (*CIE*) as the Germans and you manage to contain the beachhead, reinforcements appear around Avranches and Rennes late in the game. This reviewer was completely surprised by what seemed to be a major invasion. Was it a paradrop a la Market Garden? Well, no, since there were Tactical Fighter Wings, Headquarter Units and an Armored Division. Ah, it must be the troops from Anvil/Dragoon (the historical landings in southern France). Well, not exactly. In fact, this added invasion force is merely units appearing which draw supplies from the Normandy beachheads; the computer expects the Allies to have cleared most of this portion of France by the time of appearance. Therefore, these units appear historically -- notwithstanding the fact that the lines have not expanded sufficiently to allow the reinforcements. Consequently, these units appear out of supply and easy targets for German counter-attacks. The designers feel that if the Normandy Beachhead had been contained, then an invasion of Rennes/Brittany would have been a viable alternative.

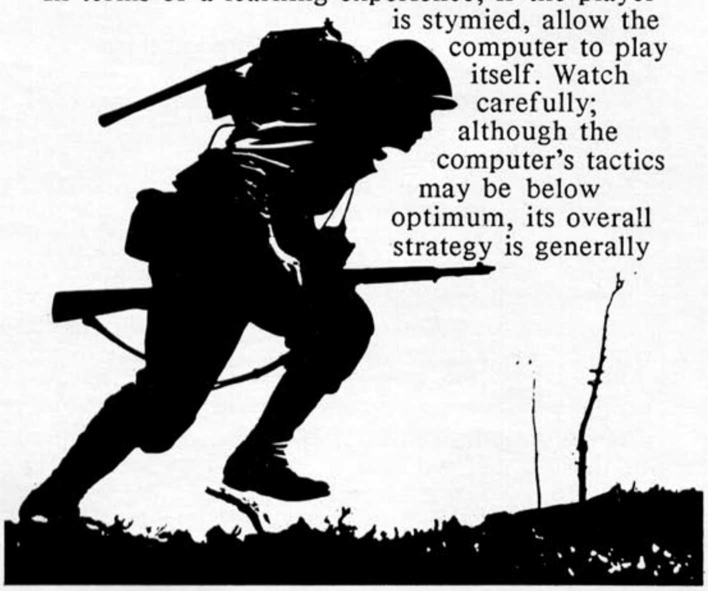
STRATEGY AND TACTICS

CIE offers both strategic and tactical decision-making. With the different scenarios, the player has a plethora of strategic choices. Tactically, one must remember to withdraw ineffective units in order to allow them recuperative time. Given the scale, one can make numerous errors and still win decisively.

DITD is much less forgiving, given the smaller scale and limited personnel/materiel. In *CIE*, units should be withdrawn when they are 70% effective; in *DITD*, one will be compelled to fill the line with units at 60% effectiveness. Be aware that these units are capable of sudden burn-out!

Also, when isolating a position, it may sometimes be beneficial to utilize siege warfare; a few days without supplies may weaken the enemy sufficiently to permit conquest with minimum use of force.

In terms of a learning experience, if the player is stymied, allow the computer to play itself. Watch carefully; although the computer's tactics may be below optimum, its overall strategy is generally best. Take lessons and apply your learning. *CIE*'s scenarios offer a multitude of approaches. Proper strategy and tactical employment will achieve victory.



On the other hand, *DITD* is a learning experience par excellence. The scenarios, seemingly unrelated, build upon one's experience in order to teach valid lessons about Desert Warfare. Read the historical documentation and scenario information *carefully*. Those subtle, devious designers at MicroProse... remember the earlier mention of the center insert? It portrays a tactical engagement at a lower scale than the game. Is this mere window dressing? NO! In fact, it is a disguised hint to the player. Desert warfare was characterized by the following: German panzer formations would entice British armor to pursue. When the British took the bait, the Germans would withdraw. The British formations would plunge into the range of the dreaded 88's (flak guns which proved deadly against armor). But British firepower would still lack range!

After a few scenarios, the player should learn that optimal tactics for the German are a strategic offensive coupled with the tactical defensive, i.e. place the panzers in a location where they pose a threat to the British, but allow the British to attack. This maneuver should permit concentration of force against isolated British formations and eventually destroy British power. The concept of strategic offensive/tactical defensive is taken straight from Napoleon vice Liddell Hart/Hans Guderian. The player's initial concept of penetrating the lines and fanning out in all directions will prove tragically misdirected; in effect, the game rewards the player for learning the proper lessons of Desert Warfare. Kudos to the designers for effectively teaching this lesson! As the British, do not engage piece-meal; concentration is the key to victory.

CIE is more forgiving than *DITD*. Its scale is more ambitious, as are its scenarios; however, in this reviewer's opinion, *DITD* teaches a more effective lesson in warfare.

DITD is tighter and more balanced. Does this mean it is a better game? Not really. One must consider where one's interests lie. Personally, operational simulations seem more readily adaptable to real-time play, but the purchaser will have to decide for himself.

CONCLUSIONS

Both products are recommended. *CIE* offers five scenarios in one package, a bargain. While *DITD* lacks a campaign scenario, the scale offers a reasonable explanation. We can eagerly look forward to the next *Command Series* game, *Conflict in Vietman*. In 1969 who would have ever thought we would be looking forward to conflict in Viet Nam!

M. Evan Brooks is an attorney with the Federal Government. He is also a Major in the Army Reserves, having completed Command General Staff College and the Army War College.



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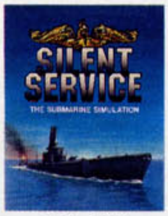
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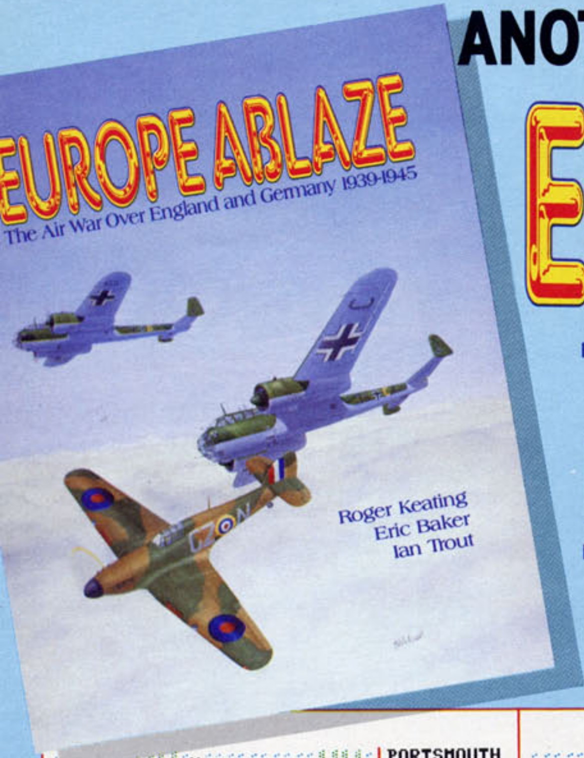
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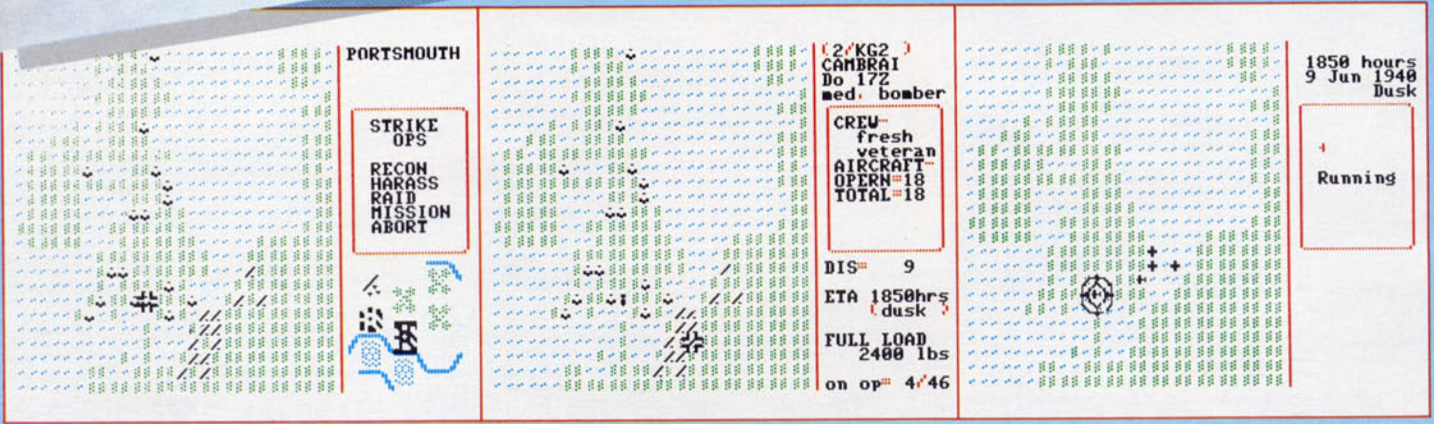
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Targets range from city centres (population, industry, communications and port facilities) to radar stations, airfields and shipping lanes.

The weather routines have been carefully integrated into the game system and such occurrences as storm fronts, ground fog and moonlight are certain to frustrate the would-be mission controller.

Each air commander is blessed (or cursed) with a comprehensive doctrine which may restrict his target selection, limit his escort allocation and/or determine the combat actions of his air formations. Sometimes it's not just the enemy which must be overcome, but also your own higher command.

The depth and detail of this carefully researched simulation is made possible solely through the machine code programming skills of Roger Keating and his unique talent for squeezing out the last ounce of R.A.M. The game features superb hi-res graphics and a very user friendly order structure.

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Computer Football 1985

In the past few months a bumper crop of computer football games have appeared. Rick Teverbaugh covers some of these games in his *Sports Scoreboard* column. Lew Fisher and Erich Faust share an interesting statistical analysis of Lance Haffner's **3-1 Football.** Finally, CGW assistant editor, Bill Oxner, tells us about the new game that has the CGW offices staying open late at night, **NFL Challenge.** So here's the kickoff. . .



Rick Teverbaugh's

SPORTS SCOREBOARD

Now that we are firmly entrenched in the football season, and of course we know that's where championships are won, in the trenches, this would be a good time to look at what grid games are currently available for us blue chip coaches.

The rookie in the lineup that's causing the biggest stir is **NFL Challenge** from XOR Corporation.

The program is so extensive that it takes up nearly all of the 256K available on the IBM. That makes it nearly impossible to convert into format for the Apple II+ or IIe or Commodore 64. There is a MacIntosh version in the works and some serious consideration is being given for a IIc version.

The magic of this program is the visual display of the game once both offense and defense has selected the plays. If you've ever seen John Madden's CBS Chalkboard come to life on television, that's exactly what you get with *NFL Challenge.*

The play unfolds on a grid display of Xs and Os. Then to repeat the influence television has obviously had on this game design, there's a slow motion replay of the play.

There's another newcomer to the computer football scene and that's **Super Bowl Sunday** from Avalon Hill. There are 20 Super Bowl teams included from the initial champion Green Bay Packers all the way up to last season's 49ers and Dolphins.

Many options are available to you in playing the game. They begin with the choice for 5, 10 or 15 minute quarters. The offensive play selection is a bit limited, but after the play is chosen you can pick one of three formations. If it's a run you can select the running back and if it's a pass you can pick the quarterback and the receiver.

Defense is even more enjoyable. First there are only three basic defenses (pass, run or normal), but then you can blitz one or more linebackers, key on a particular running back, bring in an extra lineman or a fifth defensive back and finally double cover a receiver.

After all that there's a graphic presentation of the play, followed by a scoreboard that shows the exact yardage gained and the down and other pertinent information. The game really has everything it should, like penalties, fumbles and injuries.

Right now it is available to Commodore owners, but as successful as it should be, there are probably more versions to follow and perhaps more teams.

Before taking a quick look at are veterans of the computer football lineup, let me express disappointment that Epyx's **World's Greatest Football Game** wasn't available to cover here. We'll try for the next issue. A quick peek at the game at CES showed a lot of promise, much more than the baseball equivalent.

Probably the king of our returning letter-winners is SSI's **Computer Quarterback.** I've probably logged more quarters with this game than all the others combined. The game is a solid test, whether playing against the computer or another human opponent.

The variety of plays included, along with the ability to use real teams makes it an enduring classic. The graphics are extremely mediocre and it wouldn't surprise me if SSI booted the game up in a new, more pleasant, 64K or 128K version in the future.

Avalon Hill's **Computer Football Strategy** is still around, though I'm not sure why. The game feels more like a guessing game than a real football challenge. Try to sell me on the realism of a football game where the same offensive play selection and the same defense always yields the same results. Go on and try.

Then there's Lance Haffner's **3-in-1 Football,** which is totally text but still enjoyable to play and realistic to boot. Right now there are over 500 teams available from the college, NFL and USFL ranks and more are on the way.

Previously the only system Haffner's game was available for was the Apple. Now the IBM version is out and by the time the ink is dry of this copy of CGW, a version should be out for the Commodore 64. The 1985 football season will be available Dec. 23 and will include some 167 college teams, 28 NFL, 14 USFL plus some more great college teams out of the past.

For those of you bent on frustration, there's Gamestar's **On-Field Football,** which is very nearly as bad as their **On-Court Tennis** is good. There's

some near-perfect hand-to-eye coordination necessary just to complete one pass or gain a yard, yet the computer almost never makes a mistake.

Finally there's **Touchdown Football** from Imagic. It is a game with excellent graphics, in fact on a color monitor it looks like the Miami Dolphins are taking on the Pittsburgh Steelers. Play selection isn't that difficult and the computer opponent is tough but honest.

That about wraps up this issue's edition, but next time around I hope to get Epyx' football game as well as their Winter Games and maybe one or two others.

---

3 in 1 Football
A Statistical Comparison

by Lew Fisher and Erich Faust

3 IN 1 FOOTBALL (Apple, C-64, IBM); Lance Haffner Games P.O. Box 100594 Nashville, TN 37210

We own or have played most of the board and computer football games available today. Out of all of them, *3 in 1 Football* (3FB) is by far our favorite. This is for several reasons. First, it is a statistically based game using all the key offensive players of each team. Second, literally hundreds of past and present professional and college teams are included. This allows for an almost unlimited number of match-ups and interesting replays. Third, although a text game, it is exciting and a real "white knuckler". It has a range of fifteen offensive plays (including scouting reports) and six defensive alignments.

3FB is simple to play and each game can be played in less than half an hour. After each game a multitude of team and individual stats can be displayed on the screen or transferred to a printer.

We took our two favorite NFL teams; the Miami Dolphins and the San Francisco 49ers. We then replayed each team's full 1984 season and compared it to the actual season to test *3FB*'s accuracy.

Frankly, we feel the results of *3FB* are truly amazing. Admittedly, there are some discrepancies - such as the 49ers losing three games, and the fact that the 49er defense (which allowed the fewest points in the NFL) plays weaker than the Dolphins (which allowed 71 more points than the 49ers in the real season). Other major differences include a lower average yards per catch for most of both team's receivers, and Miami's Pete Johnson only scoring two TD's rushing (Shula used him to ram the ball in 12 times). It should be noted that while each player picks each play, the computer chooses who will throw, run or receive the ball. This is based on the number of times each player appeared during the actual season.

Some of the statistical differences for the Dolphins are due to the fact that Lew (as Shula) stayed mostly with shorter, surer passes rather than going deep often. Still, there probably should have been more long receptions to Clayton, Duper and Solomon.

Erich, on the other hand, stuck more to the actual game plan of the real 49ers. Differences between their two performances are more apt to be due to statistical range than any flaws in the program.

Montana and Marino were close to their '84 performance. as was the running of Tyler and Nathan. True, Tyler did get a lot more TD's, but Erich ran a lot more inside the 20. Wersching and Von Schaman were so close to their actual FG percentages you would swear they really were kicking the ball! Also, McLemore proved just as dangerous in his punt returns as he was in real life. As previously stated, the pass receivers were somewhat off in the per yards caught category, but accurate as to who received and the number of passes each player caught. Both teams threw a little more during the computer played season; therefore, receivers caught a few more. Except for Clayton, TD receptions for receivers were very reflective.

You can draw your own conclusions from our statistics; however, *3FB* seems to be extremely accurate.

Besides the way each team was individually handled, some of the differences in performance were probably due to statistical range. If each real team were to again replay their '84 season they might win or lose another game or two - due to differences in luck, weather and many other factors. Similarly, individual performances would not be exactly the same. This should be heavily considered in any comparison, especially in a simulation where random number generation partially determines the

49ers

Actual '84 Stats					3-1 Replay Stats				
Won 15	Lost 1				Won 13	Lost 3			
Points Scored	475				Points Scored	490			
Points Allowed	227				Points Allowed	260			
Passing	Att	C	Int	TD	Pct.	Att	C	Int	TD	Pct
Montana	432	279	10	28	64.6	465	312	14	30	67.0

Rushing	Att	Yd	Avg	TD	Att	Yd	Avg	TD
Tyler	246	1262	5.1	7	262	1377	5.3	15
Craig	155	649	4.2	7	141	568	4.0	6

Receiving	No	Yd	Avg	TD	No	Yd	Avg	TD
Craig	71	675	9.5	3	70	576	8.2	6
Clark	52	880	16.9	6	63	931	14.7	6
Cooper	41	459	11.2	4	50	664	13.2	5
Solomon	40	737	18.4	10	46	699	15.1	8

Dolphins

Actual '84 Stats					3-1 Replay Stats					
Won 14	Lost 2					Won 14	Lost 2			
Points Scored	513					Points Scored	456			
Points Allowed	298					Points Allowed	255			
Passing	Att	C	Int	TD	Pct.	Att	C	Int	TD	Pct
Marino	564	362	17	48	64.2	640	444	12	44	69.3

Rushing	Att	Yd	Avg	TD	Att	Yd	Avg	TD
Bennett	144	606	4.2	7	111	403	3.6	3
Nathan	118	558	4.7	1	109	522	4.7	5
Carter	100	495	5.0	1	86	348	4.0	4

Receiving	No	Yd	Avg	TD	No	Yd	Avg	TD
Clayton	73	1389	19.0	18	86	1273	14.8	13
Duper	71	1306	18.4	8	65	936	14.4	10
Nathan	61	579	9.6	2	80	644	8.1	2

outcome of each play.

Additionally, even if we wanted to, we could never hope to recreate the '84 season - exactly play for play. This most certainly affected statistical results.

Considering all the above, we haven't played a game (including APBA, Strat-o-Matic or SSI's Computer Quarterback) that can compare to 3FB in realism, excitement and ease of play.

[Ed. Note: In terms of comparisons with other football games, it would have been interesting if the authors had had an opportunity to see the new NFL Challenge *from XOR. Unfortunately their article was written before the game was available.]*

NFL Challenge

by Bill Oxner

NFL CHALLENGE (IBM); XOR Corporation Minnetonka, MN
1-800-NFL-CHAL Reader Service #46

NFL Challenge (NFLC) is the finest computer sports game I've ever seen. It is a high-tech, state-of-the-art simulation that is truly remarkable in recreating the "feel" of a professional football game. Please note that this reviewer is primarily a baseball fan. *NFLC* knocked my jockstrap off.

Let's get the wailing and gnashing of teeth out of the way. This game is expensive. $99.95 (IBM 256K). It is also worth it. You begin to get that impression when you see the packaging. It is the equal of any $500 software package and will look quite at home on a Computerland business software shelf. Solid, thorough documentation. Laminated cardboard player aids that are quite complex but realistic. Before you ever place the disk in the drive you know that this product is likely to be a winner.

The game comes on two disks, one for play and one for team data. The team data is from the 1984 NFL season. These data files can be loaded into any word processor and updated or new players added. Players are rated from 0-100 in each of several categories of offensive abilities (speed, blocking, running, receiving and passing), defensive skills (speed, rushing and passing defense) and specialty types (kicking and punting). There are 49 players per team.

The offensive options consist of 49 distinct plays, broken into six categories (short yardage, I-Formation, Double wing, HB split to weakside, shotgun and special plays). The defense can counter with 26 different plays, four categories (short yardage, 3-4 Line, 4-3 Line and long yardage).

The above items are all nice but don't really distinguish *NFLC* from the pack. It jukes the defenders and goes all the way in its use of the "electronic chalkboard". This is an X's and O's

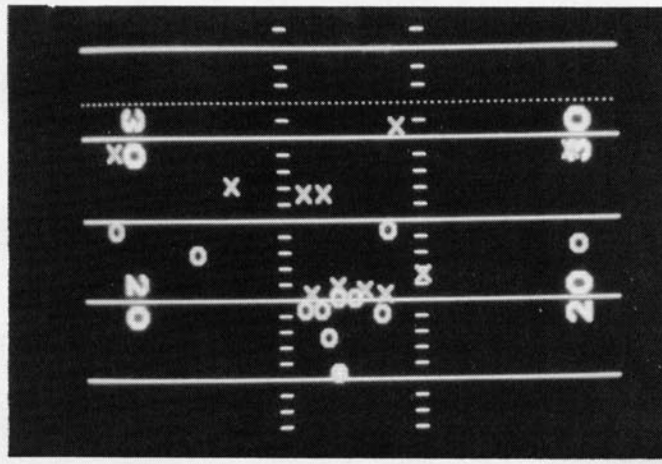
picture of each play. Example: Offense calls a halfback counter to the weakside, defense calls for a free safety blitz. Each team (consisting of moving X's and O's) comes to the line of scrimmage with the proper alignments. The ball is snapped and 22 "players" do what they are supposed to do. Offensive linemen block to the strongside as the halfback takes the handoff and starts in that direction. Defensive linemen react and the free safety comes flying in on the blitz. Suddenly the

If there was such a thing as the "CGW Seal of Approval", NFL Challenge would get it

halfback counters to the weakside and gains nine yards before being brought down by the outside linebacker. If you like, you can view the "instant replay"! The same devotion to detail is apparent on all the various plays. Receivers run the correct routes and defenders play zone or man-to-man, as you wish. Now you know why this one takes 256K to run.

Statistics are equally dazzling, at least team statistics. Individual stats are not yet available and this is a weakness in such a fine product. One other minor irritation is the lack of names - only uniform numbers (real-life) are used. You will have to get a football guide (1984) that lists names and numbers if you want to get the full enjoyment out of the simulation. One minor bug has been noted - after punts the game clock continues to run (on change of possession). Not a biggie, given the ambitious scope of the game.

If there was such a thing as a "CGW Seal of Approval" this game would get it. It will be used in an office league that will be in full-swing as you read this review. With a wall full of games to choose from, *NFLC* is the one we selected for our football league replay. Visicalc is the program that sold Apple computers, *NFLC* may be the one that sells IBM PC's to sports gamers.





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F-15 COMPARISON

Feature	"Real" F-15	F-15 STRIKE EAGLE	Imitation Game
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• Cannon	Yes	Yes	Yes
• MK-82 Bombs	Yes	Yes	No
• Air-Air Missles	Yes	Yes	No
2. Sophisticated Electronics			
• Heads Up Display	Yes	Yes	No
• Radar	Yes	Yes	No
• Electronic Counter Measures	Yes	Yes	No
• Inertial Navigation	Yes	Yes	No
3. Real Combat Missions	Yes	Yes	No
4. Developed and Tested by Real Fighter Pilots	Yes	Yes	No
5. Aerobatic Flying (Loops, Splits, and YoYos)	Yes	Yes	No

F-15 Strike Eagle is available for Commodore 64/128, Apple II and Atari XL/XE computers for a suggested retail of only $34.95. Also for Macintosh and IBM PC/PC Jr., for a suggested retail of $39.95. Call or write for more information or MC/VISA orders.

GREAT REVIEWS!

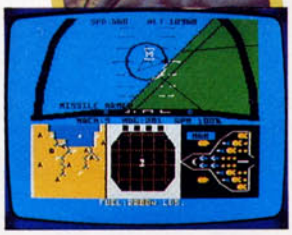
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USA TODAY – F-15 STRIKE EAGLE
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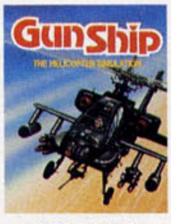
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Peter Paplaskas





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Ultima III

The Macintosh Version

by Patricia Fitzgibbons

Name: Ultima III
Type: Role-Playing Adventure
System: Many
Format: Disk
#Players: One
Author: Lord British (Richard Garriott)
Price: $59.95
Publisher: Origin Systems, Inc.
340 Harvey Road
Manchester, NH 03103

Have you ever seen a dragon smile? No? Well, perhaps "smile" is the wrong word; "smirk" is really more accurate. For it is indeed a smirk -- that lip curling, ear-to-ear, somewhat idiotic subgenus of smiles -- which wreathes the snout of an extremely self-satisfied dragon on the title screen of Ultima III. And why is this particular basilisk so pleased with himself? Why else? He has just incinerated a quartet of erstwhile heroes. But allow a hypertrophied lizard his moment of triumph: Lord British -- and you -- will have the last laugh.

Published by His Lordship's own company, Origin Systems, Exodus: Ultima III is the latest game in the ambitious series to be converted to the Macintosh. Exodus is a logical extension of the two earlier chapters of the Ultima saga, and the goal is, once again, to vanquish a powerful evildoer; however, this game is much more vast in concept and execution. Virtually every level of every dungeon, every shop in every town, and every twisting, frustrating maze must be explored. There is plenty to do in Ultima III, and there are few shortcuts to victory.

Unlike Ultima I and II's solitary adventurers, Exodus lets you create a party of up to four characters. Each party member may be assigned a different profession (such as fighter, thief, or wizard). Multi-classed professions (including paladins, illusionists, and druids) may also be incorporated into the group, but only "pure" spellcasters can reach the maximum ability levels needed to complete the quest. The most balanced team would consist of a dwarf fighter, an elf thief, a fuzzy wizard, and a hobbit cleric.

The task of coordinating each character's development and possessions (including food, gold, weapons, and armor) can be complicated. Because each of the four is vitally important to winning the game, one or two "super characters" must not develop at the expense of their weaker comrades. This is an interesting strategic issue which couldn't arise in the earlier Ultima games.

Most of the game's activities take place in the plains, woodlands, towns, or dungeons of the continent of Sosaria. There's no space travel in this Ultima, but the party will take several side trips to a mysterious "Forgotten Land." While they explore Sosaria, looking for fights and clues to various puzzles, the entire party is represented by a single icon. However, in the combat sequences each character or monster appears and acts individually. Because combat occurs in real-time, you must decide very quickly what each party member will do: fire an arrow, hurl an dagger, or cast a spell. Speed and quick thinking mean success in these hazardous encounters. Tip: Seeing that it is so difficult for a beginning party to survive, you might want to create several "sacrificial" characters whose sole purpose in life is to transfer their food, gold, weapons, and armor to your "real" party members. This technique gives your team a leg up at the start of the game.

The Ultima III package contains an abundance of excellent documentation: a colorful cloth map of Sosaria; two elaborately illustrated spell booklets; a detailed "Book of Play"; and a handy player reference card. Ignore Lord British's frequent misuse of "thee, thy, and thou," and just have fun reading the history of foul Exodus. The only serious error in documentation exists on the first page of the instruction booklet; players are told that they "...must follow the arcane rituals described on the back page of the player reference card," to learn how to clone a player diskette. No such instructions exist and, unfortunately, the master diskette must be used for play.

The game's graphics (credited to Marsha Meuse) are outstanding: not only can a fighter icon be easily distinguished from a ranger or thief, but you can see the buttons on a jester's jacket... and even a dragon's smile. The gargoyles and griffins are truly fearsome, as would be the poisonous bradle but for its twinkling, Kewpie doll eyes. The lack of color on the Mac is no real drawback; much is done with patterns and shading.

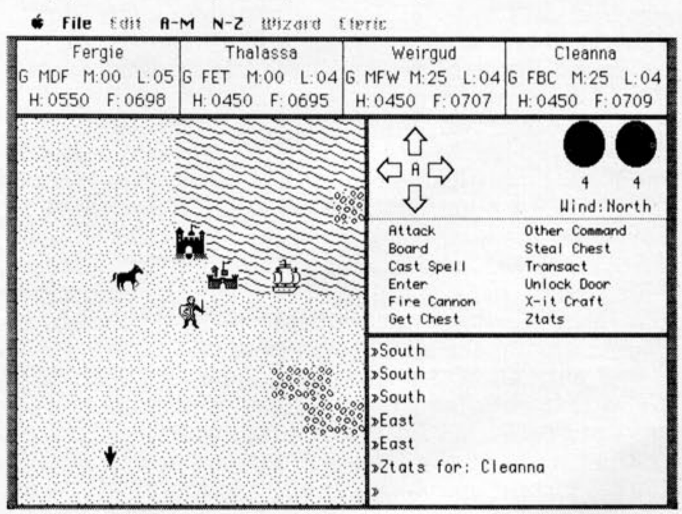
Forget the game's sound effects: they're awful. Toggle off the volume for a much more enjoyable playing session.

The Macintosh user interface has not been adequately exploited in Ultima III. Use of the mouse should be fun, but in this game it's aggravating (eventually, I abandoned the mouse in favor of the slightly less klutzy keyboard commands). One irritating example is all the moving and clicking that is required -- between three widely-spaced spots on the screen -- to view a character's status; it would have been much easier to click twice on the character's name. And why wasn't the "drag and click" capability used to allow diagonal movement by the party? Programmer James Van Artsdalen told me that the diagonal movement option was discussed at Origin Systems, but was rejected as "upsetting the balance of the game." Still, it seems unfair that monsters can crisscross the screen and your party can't.

There is a tremendous amount of disk access, especially with a 128K Mac (I also tested the game on a 512K Mac) Van Artsdalen responded to this criticism by saying that "...the game does swap out some code during play, and doesn't keep the maps around because of the lack of extra space, but then Ultima III is a big game." Indeed it is, but more could have been done to speed up play.

A few strange bugs surfaced during my many gaming sessions, but perhaps these were unique to my review copy. The several program crashes I experienced (always at the "Journey Onward" point) are being investigated by the publisher. Note: Use the Mac's desk accessories during the game at your own risk.

Even though the Mac conversion is far from ideal, Ultima III is a very enjoyable game, and well worth its hefty price.



GOLAN FRONT



by William H. Harrington

A Computer Game of the 1973 Arab/Israeli War in the North




```
Name:       Golan Front
Type:       Wargame
System:     Apple, C-64
#Players:   1-2
Price:      $60.00
Designer:   W.J. Nichols
Publisher:  Simulations Canada
            P.O. Box 452
            Bridgewater, Nova Scotia
            Canada B4V 2X6
```

[Ed. Note: Simulations Canada's newest computer wargame continues Sim Can's standard pattern of combining a text only program with a traditional board game map and counters. While this approach may have contributed to lower RID ratings on Sim Can's earlier games, there are a growing number of computer game grognards who think Sim Can's approach is on target. William Harrington is one of those grognards. Here is his review of Golan Front.*]*

While Israel slept on the eve of Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, October 6, 1973, the armed forces of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan secretly massed on Israel's frontiers. At 1400 hours they attacked. In the south, on the Sinai Front, the Egyptian Army stormed the Bar Lev line and swarmed across the Suez Canal. But nowhere was Israel in more mortal danger than the Golan Front. Here in this barren moonscape less than 32 miles separated the hard pressed Israeli front lines from the Mediterranean Sea and certain defeat. Heavily outnumbered, two under-strength Israeli brigades fought off five Arab League divisions while thousands of sophisticated Soviet Surface to Air Missiles (SAM's) and hundreds of MIG fighters provided cover for the advancing Arab Army. *GOLAN FRONT* (GF), from Simulations Canada, is a sophisticated yet surprisingly playable simulation that recreates this desperate and fateful battle that Israel fought among the empty wastes of the Golan.

As with all of Sim Can's computer war games *GF* is text only, no hi-res color graphics here. Instead you'll find on opening the game box two folding maps of the Golan Front including roads, towns, terrain and forward observation posts. And to record the shifting fortunes of war on the battle map are several dozen conventional die-cut cardboard counters, blue for Israeli units, red for Arab forces. The game may be either two player, or solitaire. The computer can play either side. And make no mistake, the computer opponent is one very tough customer! What *GF* and similar games from Sim Can lack in memory intensive graphics they more than make up for in considerable depth and uncanny realism. The feeling is definitely "You are there" as you assume the role of either Arab or Israeli Army Commander on the Golan Front.

GF uses a variation of the same gaming system first introduced by Sim Can for **Fall Gelb**, their simulation of the WW II Battle of France. In place of the standard hex grid to record movement and resolve combat, the battlefield is divided into irregular areas, some named for nearby towns or terrain features, others simply given a numeric designation. Individual units are "ordered" to each location, just as a theater commander would order to a location. The tactical options available to each unit include assault, advance, defend, delay and withdraw. Individual unit commanders may even unilaterally issue new orders to their units to respond to changing battlefield conditions, with sometimes disastrous results! Should morale or exhaustion reach a critical point players may even lose complete control of the battered, exhausted units in their command.

Sim Can's *GF* is a first class study of the problems of command and control on the modern battlefield as well as contemporary strategy and tactics. Few games simulate so well the confusion, ineptitude and mishap that dog even the great battlefield commanders. And that's not even taking into account the vagaries of supply, international political intrigues, the competing demands of the Sinai Front and the differing capabilities of the units under your command. Indeed, so detailed is *GF* that each unit commander that took part in the battle, Israeli or Arab, is individually rated for combat experience and initiative.

GF begins with an appropriate quote from Henry Kissinger and the ominous date, 6 October. Players may select a wide variety of menu options including detailed reports on every aspect of the battle from current intelligence estimates (not always accurate), available aircraft for the next days air superiority and ground support missions, reports from the Sinai Front, morale estimates and available reinforcements arriving during the next game turn. The mechanics of the game are surprisingly simple. You could learn to play *GF* in 15 minutes, playing it well is another matter! Game turns are divided into AM & PM phases with air strikes limited to daytime operations only. In your role of commander you'll have to determine supply priorities for each of the units under your command, numbers of aircraft allocated to air superiority, ground support and hair-raising anti-aircraft strikes against your opponent's SAM sites. Each unit is, in turn, assigned an objective posture and obeys its last order until changed or until the unit commander exercises a command decision and countermands the order. Oh yes! Be prepared for more than a little confusion.

What *GF* does best is not only succeed as a sophisticated simulation of one of the few "modern" battles using the new technology; it also succeeds as a role playing game as well. The perspective of the game, the front commander, is so accurately portrayed that the actual feel of commanding a modern combined arms force in the electronic battlefield is almost uncanny. During the first crucial hours and days of the game/battle you'll feel all of the frustration and exhilaration as the Arab and Israeli commanders struggle to retain control of the battle rather than becoming swept up in the mounting tide of events. Few other games so accurately recreate this "feel" of actual combat command. In addition, *GF*'s game mechanics don't get in the way of the game's flow. What does happen is the ability to lose yourself so completely in the game that for a few hours you are in a command bunker amid the babble of voices, confusion of battle and the almost unendurable waiting as men and machines battle for these barren hills on the road to Jerusalem or Damascus.

One very nice touch is the presence, very much felt, of the Sinai Front. This feature neatly resolves a problem with many board and computer simulations - sometimes called the "Edge of the World" phenomenon. Battles don't exist in a vacuum but are dependent on and influenced by the fortunes of events many miles away. The frustration you'll feel, as your desperate requests for air cover and reinforcements are refused, is as much a part of the game as the clash of arms on the field. The game detail is extensive and the fragmentary and often contradictory reports received before each game turn only serve to heighten the sense of imperfect command that any field commander knows only too well. *GF* provides a fascinating study of a small, highly trained and motivated force facing a vastly larger but qualitatively inferior force. Either side faces unique problems and opportunities. Both share some of the most difficult terrain in the world and events far beyond their control. *GF* is a first rate military simulation. Reader Service #52

ing-point operations per second!

So, does incredible computing speed mean anything to computer game playing? The answer is a definite "Yes." The kind of speed that the ST currently offers can greatly improve arcade games, adventures, and strategy games.

In arcade games, scrolls can be smoother and character animation can be more colorful and more intricate without slowing down play action.

In adventure games, feedback could be lightning fast, the player could use the screen to draw and save a map, and the range of interactions allowed between the player and the program could be greatly expanded. Even in familiar adventures that do not exploit the features of the ST, such as Wishbringer from Infocom, responses to input are almost instantaneous.

Strategy games programmed for a super high speed computer like the ST could be made more human-like in their strategy formulations and responses to human opponents. Before now, programmers were forced to avoid overly complex algorithms and lengthy decision tables because the computer would take so long to process them that play would grind to a virtual halt. Now its up to the programmers to really push the 16/32 bit processors to their limits. When they do, the players will be the winners.

For Atari 520ST owners there is good news and bad news about software. The good news is that many major companies such as **Broderbund, Sublogic, Penguin, Infocom, Activision, Micropro,** and **SSI** (plus dozens of minor companies) have acquired one or more ST development packages from Atari. Of course, only time will tell whether or not the programs that these companies produce will exploit the speed of the ST. Initial products (some already being delivered) include *Flight Simulator* from Sublogic, the entire set of *Infocom adventures*, *Gato* from Spectrum Holobyte, a version of Bruce Webster's *Sundog* from FTL, a *word processor* from Haba, and *GEMWrite*, *GEMDraw*, and *GEMPaint* from Digital Research.

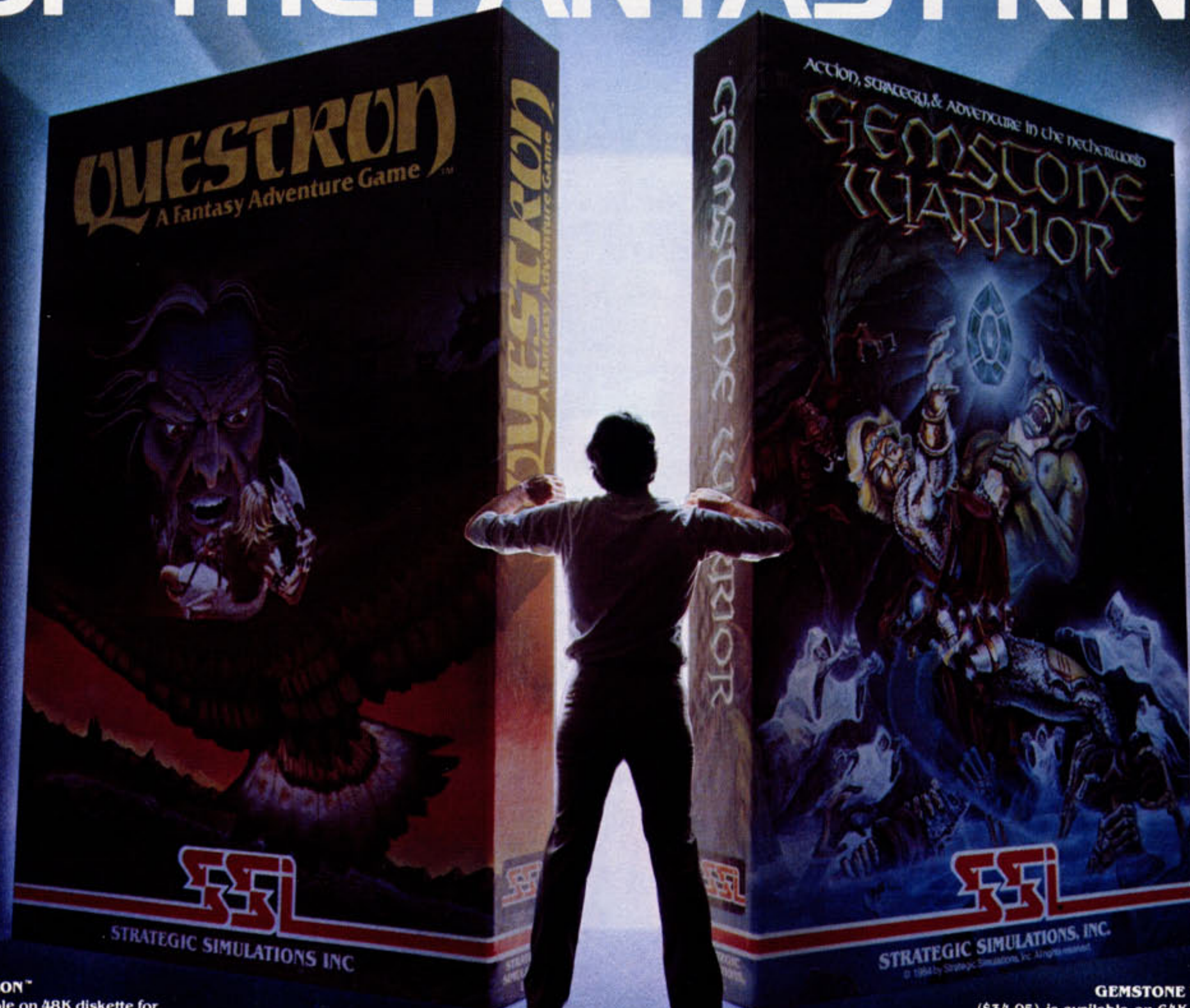
The bad news for the 520ST owners is that **Electronic Arts** (producers of CGW top-rated Atari games *M.U.L.E.* and *Seven Cities of Gold*) seems to be putting all of its eggs in the Amiga basket. Perhaps E.A. will see the wisdom of also supporting the ST before too many of those eggs break.

Fortunately, in the world of computer gaming, most software companies choose to support machines based on market size. My bet is that after consumers have had a chance to compare the ST and the Amiga, they will choose the machine that delivers the most performance for the money and the software companies will follow.

[Ed. Note: This is Dave Stone's final installment of The Atari Playfield. We want to extend our thanks to Dave for covering the turbulent Atari field for the past year and a half. He is persuing other interests but will continue to be a contributor to CGW.

Gregg Williams of Byte magazine will take over duties as our Atari columnist with the Jan-Feb '86 issue.]

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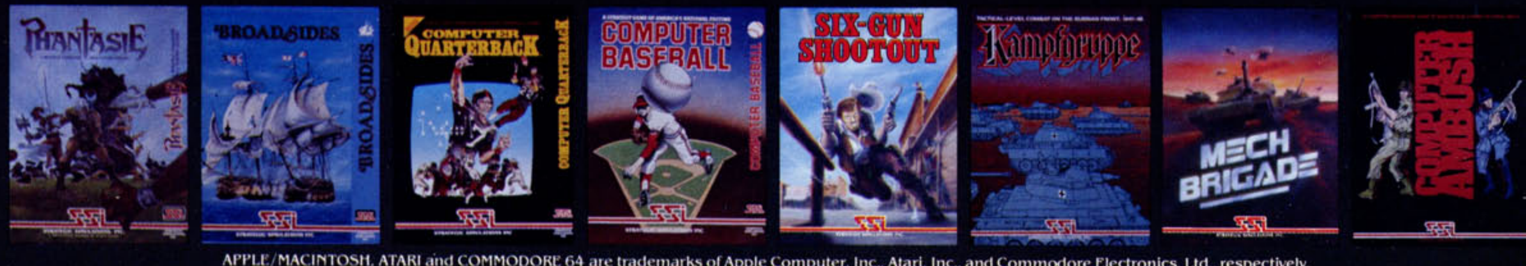
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TELEGAME (cont.)

PLAYNET, P.O. Box 587, Wynantskill, NY 12198, 800-PLAYNET.

GAMES COMPUTERS PLAY, 112 East Market St., York, PA 17401, 717-848-2660.

GAMEMASTER, 1723 Howard St., Suite 106, Evanston, IL 60202, 312-328-9009.

There are also hundreds of private bulletin board systems (BBSs) all over the country. Many BBSs allow you to download game programs or participate in play-by-mail games via message boards or electronic mail. To find out the modem numbers of BBSs in your area, ask members of your local user group or check the "P.A.M.S." BBS list that is available on CompuServe's GameSIG, The Source's Member Publishing, and the People's Message System BBS (619-561-7277). Also, check past CGW "Telegaming" columns for listings of modem numbers of many popular BBSs.

5) DO I NEED SPECIAL EQUIPMENT?

Generally, no. However, there are some exceptions: several of CompuServe's games require VIDTEX software if you want to receive graphics; Plato is accessible only by special plasma terminals or HOMELINK software; Delphi offers several games that can be played only if you have a VT52 or VT100 terminal; PlayNet requires that you use a Commodore-64 computer; and Games Computers Play is only for Atari computers.

6) DO I HAVE TO KNOW HOW TO PLAY ANY COMPUTER GAMES?

Not really. If you happen to be a whiz on your PC version of Adventure, Blackjack, Hangman, or Chess, your expertise will carry over to online play. However, the most exciting telegames are unique, and you'll have to start out as a novice and practice them online just like everyone else.

7) WHAT TYPES OF GAMES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE?

Most systems offer single-player games (you versus a computer) such as Star Trek, Backgammon, Trivia, and Adventure. Some also provide multi-player games (you versus others) such as CompuServe's MegaWars, Island of Kesmai, and You Guessed It!; Plato's Empire; and GameMaster's Empyrean Challenge. Very few companies offer "real" graphics; Plato and PlayNet are two that do. CompuServe and Delphi have established online special interest groups for gamers; The Source offers a Post Games bulletin board.

8) HOW MUCH DOES TELEGAMING COST?

If you're not careful, online fees can really add up. Depending on your budget and gaming preferences, you can spend as little or as much money as you desire. Here is a list of system charges: the first amount is the regular cost for a subscription; the second is the hourly charge for nonprime time access (evenings, weekends, and holidays) using a 300 baud modem.

COMPUSERVE -- $29.95/$6
THE SOURCE -- $49.95/$8.40
PLATO -- $50/$5
DELPHI -- $49.95/$6
PLAYNET -- $39.95/$2
GAMES COMPUTERS PLAY -- $30/$6
GAMEMASTER -- $15/$3

Most BBSs are free (excluding long-distance telephone costs), but more and more SysOps (systems operators) are charging nominal membership fees of $10 to $30 a year.

Investigate ads for discounted signup packs, especially those that include several free online hours; sometimes you can find a real bargain. But be aware of additional online costs: telecommunications surcharges for using Tymnet, Telenet, Uninet, DataPac, even AT&T; prime time (daytime) and/or 1200 baud access fees; monthly minimums (whether you dial in or not); and connect minimums per call.

9) WHAT ARE THE BEST AND WORST ONLINE GAMES?

That, of course, is largely a matter of personal taste. Many gamers feel that fast-paced, exciting, multi-player games of warfare and conquest -- such as CompuServe's MegaWars or Plato's Empire -- are tops. However, others prefer leisurely-paced, single-player puzzlers like Adventure, Chess, or Trivia.

Games Computers Play offer three hi-res graphics games (Bio-War CyberTank and Lords of Space). The graphics look nice but as GCP is an Atari only network, I have not had the opportunity to play the games.

Most folks seem to agree that rudimentary public domain games don't belong on a fee-based service -- unless the programs are available for downloading to your own computer. Naturally, any game that is bug-ridden should be exterminated.

10) WHAT TYPES OF GAMES WILL WE SEE IN THE FUTURE?

How would you like to join a few spacestation crew members for a quick round of Galactic Diplomacy? Or, maybe you'd enjoy tackling a treasure-filled dungeon with party members from Zurich, Rangoon, Nairobi, and Bogota (simultaneous translation optional). Multi-player games are hot now, but they'll really sizzle in coming years. We'll soon be playing games online -- simultaneously, in real time -- with thousands of users from all over the world. When computer telecommunications technology lives up to its promises, online gaming is going to be irresistible.

Adventure, fantasy, space, and war will continue to be especially popular gaming topics; graphics capabilities will greatly expand; data lines will improve; costs will decrease; and the quality of online entertainment will become crucial to the success of consumer telecommunications services. The future of telegaming is very bright, and CGW will continue to cover all major developments for you. Until next time, feel free to contact me on CompuServe at 76703,657, on The Source at BCE124, on Delphi at PFITZGIBBONS, or via U.S. Mail to:

Patricia Fitzgibbons
195 Claremont Avenue #115
Long Beach, CA 90803

Reader Service #57

SCORPIA (cont.)

And then there's that piranha. Nasty little thing, isn't it? Maybe you have something it would prefer to nibble on, besides your precious fingers. Remember, it's a fish.

You certainly have been doing a lot of running around here. Why not relax and enjoy a good movie? It may seem a little strange that Miss Voss is selling the tickets, but go ahead and buy one. Hmmm. Seems that it's a 3-D feature, and the ticket-taker is all out of those funny glasses (and isn't it strange that the place is open at night when there's a curfew on?). Oh well, go on in anyway. Don't forget to look around while you're there.

Hey, so far, so good! How about a little trip to the arcade now? There's one machine in particular you should check out. It looks like a pretty strange game, but go ahead and play it anyway. Keep an eye on your map while you do that. And, by golly, here you are at the castle. Now, if you could just get that drawbridge down. It's all in how you say it.

Then again, maybe you're wishing right now you hadn't entered the place, since it seems you just walked into a trap. Mr. Crisp is even nastier than you ever imagined. There you are, chained to the wall, and there is the platypus, stuck inside an insidious machine and about to be ground into mush. Don't panic (err, sorry, wrong game!). Remember, you are still a mail carrier. Think about it.

Gee, Crisp sure took off in a hurry, didn't he? Of course, you're still chained to the wall, but you can do something about that. Stretch a little. Ahhhh, that's better! Don't forget to free the platypus, too! And by the way, while it's not really cricket, you might want to read someone else's mail. Under the circumstances, it's forgiven.

Now it's time to explore around a bit. How about that fuzzy room? Fuzzy..does that remind you if anything? When you can see clearly again, check out everything in the room. Pay special attention to the levers. You still have to find the way out, though. I hope you're an art lover.

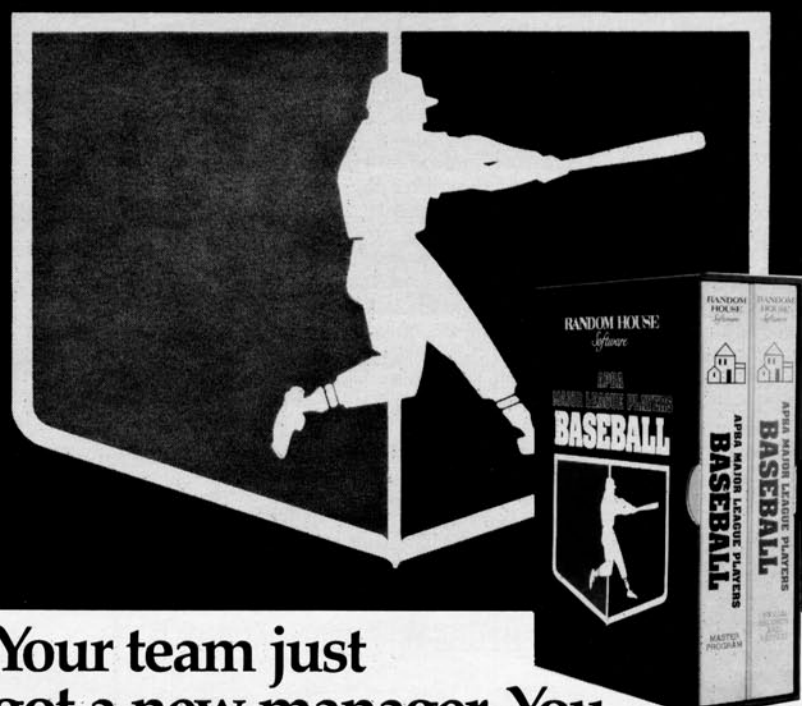
You're almost finished now. A quick trip to Voss's cottage (the hellhound should be no problem), a thorough examination of everything, and then it's off to the library. Those display cases look interesting. There seems to be a cat statue in one of them. Too bad you can't get the case open. Well, sometimes it DOES pay to be violent!

So here's the statue. Odd, there seems to be a small piece missing. Just a tiny piece, about the size of....well, I think you can guess what it is, and what you have to do. And I hope you make the right choice..good luck!

Looks like that's it for this issue. Remember if you have a game question, you can reach me at:

Scorpia
P.O. Box 338
Gracie Station
New York, NY 10028

Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your questions. See you next time!



the learning game

Games That Teach Programming

BOB PROCTOR

This issue, The Learning Game takes a look at a special category of games: those that teach concepts useful in computer programming.

In CGW issue 5.2, Gregg Williams reviewed one of the best of these, Chipwits. In Chipwits, you program a robot by placing tiles in a tray. Each tile represents one "statement" and each points to the next tile so it's easy to follow the flow. You can make your robot search for objects, navigate around obstacles and through doorways, and perform point-scoring chores like eating pies and zapping electro-crabs. The object is to make a robot that will become the point-scoring champion in one of the eight Chipwits "mazes".

Chipwits provides a very close analogy to programming in a procedural language like Basic or Pascal. To create even the simplest robot, you must use conditional branching and recursion. To create a real champion, you'll have to use subroutines and stack operations as well.

While those of us who already know how to program get very excited about Chipwits (Gregg even wished it was MORE complex), I have yet to find a child under the age of 12 who wasn't intimidated by the complexity. If we want to teach the logic of programming to a younger group -- who are certainly capable of learning it -- we need to separate the concepts and teach them one at a time.

THE INCREMENTAL APPROACH

One company in particular is putting out products that teach programming concepts one at a time. Sunburst Communications has an extensive line of educational software on traditional school subjects: math, grammar, science, logic, and now programming.

Every Sunburst program is rock solid as far as teaching goes; they're all designed by people who know their education. Some of the titles are too dry and, well, boring to hold a child's interest by themselves. They require a parent or teacher to stimulate interest and provide motivation. But then, Sunburst's games are aimed at the classroom environment, they come with a Teacher's Guide and a backup diskette. They're also a bit on the steep side -- $59 each -- compared to most educational software.

Here's a summary of the Sunburst games for would-be programmers. Reader Service #60

The Pond (Apple, Atari, C64, IBM)

This classic has been around almost two years now. An absorbing game that will hold the interest of most 7 to 9-year olds for hours. It teaches pattern recognition and how to build a repeating sequence of commands.

The Factory (Apple, Atari, C64, IBM)

Another great game for a slightly older age group (say 9 to 14). Here the solution is a "program" that's longer and more complex than for The Pond. Some deductive reasoning is needed.

For Your Next Adventure (Apple)

A game that teaches the concept of iteration. It uses the FOR-NEXT command from the Basic language as a vehicle, but the focus is really on the concept. You don't have to type in the whole command with perfect syntax, just the numbers that control the "loop".

Blazing The Basic Trail (Apple)

This one is less successful. The intent is to teach the logic of conditional and unconditional branching. You and your opponent (which can be the computer) use IF...THEN and GOTO statements to build a Basic-like program. The object is to pay attention so that you can run the program when it becomes advantageous to do so. It's a classic case of a competent and clever program that never gets a chance to teach because kids just haven't the patience to figure out what's going on.

Learning Through Logo (Apple)

The Logo language, with interactive "turtle" graphics, is an open-ended game (perhaps "pastime" is a better word) all by itself. Here's a program that provides more focus; it's a series of obstacle courses for the turtle. There are mazes to run and dots to connect. It is fun for children as young as 6 or 7.

Exploring Logo (Apple, C64)

Don't get this one confused with the one above. This is a collection of resources to help teach the Logo language to a group. It includes 22 laminated activity cards, a disk of examples, and a teacher's guide, but it is not a game.

NEW PRODUCTS

The most interesting new program of late is The Body In Focus from CBS. It was created by the Neosoft group that also did Sea Voyagers and Dinosaur Dig. This game has the same format, a chance to explore and learn in smorgasbord style by picking menu items that seem interesting, then (if you want) testing yourself by taking a 20 question, multiple choice test. Or you can take the test first and then go look for the answers you didn't know. What makes the program so good is the wonderful use of color and animation to explain bodily processes. For Apple, C64 and IBM.

Scholastic Inc. has released two titles of a new series to teach reading skills. Each package contains two short adventure games that are clever and don't require much in the way of typing skills. Scholastic recommends Tales Of Discovery for ages 8 and up but it would be better to say for children who read at a third grade level or better. The two stories here deal with dinosaurs and (believe it or not!) software piracy. Tales Of Adventure is about the same level; Scholastic says nine and up but I think this must be due to content than reading level. These two stories, getting lost in the woods and being shrunken to mouse size in your own house, place the adventurer in more danger and may seem scarier. Both programs make excellent use of graphics and get rave reviews from the intended age group.

That's all the room we have for now, keep learning!

Reader Service #59

Reader Service #61

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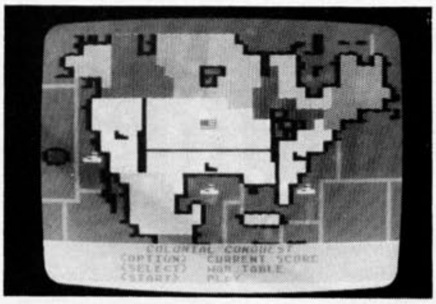
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COLONIAL CONQUEST

Name:	Colonial Conquest
Type:	Strategy
System:	Atari, C-64
# Players:	1-6
Price:	$39.95
Designer:	Dan Cermak
Publisher:	Strategic Simulations Mountain View, CA



Colonial Conquest (CC) brings back the period of conquest which swept the world, leaving few areas of the globe not controlled directly or indirectly by the major powers of the 19th Century. And, as one of the major powers (England, France, Germany, Russia, the United States, or Japan) it will be your duty to "civilize" as many of these backward (read as pre-industrial) countries as possible, while using your military force and diplomatic guile to limit your opponents from doing the same. Divided into eight regions, the world contains over 120 territories for you to uplift (read as grab) with an income bonus should you control an entire Region.

CC should not, however, be thought of as a difficult game. Its origins, according to its designer Dan Cermak, has its roots in the popular board game Risk.

Dissatisfied with the simplicity of Risk, Dan designed a board game of his own which changed over the years, adding this and deleting that, until he had the opportunity to incorporate much of it into this, his first computer game design.

Each of the major countries in CC have certain strengths and weaknesses making each of them, when the geographical factors are considered, different and challenging to play. England, for example, has the highest quality armies and fleets available.

Its fleets are, as would be expected, inexpensive but its armies are twice as expensive as all except Germany's. Russia, on the other hand, has inexpensive armies of low quality and expensive fleets of equally poor quality. Thus, while England uses sea power to expand its empire, Russia must use large numbers of land troops to conquer adjacent territories.

The game is played in yearly cycles consisting of building phases at the beginning of the year which are followed by four quarterly turns of movement and combat. The building phases include an Army Build Phase, during which you build armies in your production centers; a Navy Build Phase in which your navies are built at coastal production centers; a Fortification Phase which allows you to fortify strategic territories and thereby double their defense; an Economic Aid Phase during which you may give money to human players for whatever reason, to computer players as a bribe to go to peace with you, and to minor countries to stiffen a key minor in the path of one of your opponents; an Espionage Phase which allows you to spy the approximate value and number (but not quality) of the defending troops of minor countries and more expensively major countries; and finally the Subversion Phase, during which you may use the information gained the previous phase to "buy off" the defending armies of a minor country. If you have a great amount of money, or the minor country is poorly defended, this can result in a coup, which will give you control of the country with a minimum garrison.

The four movement phases each contain an Army Movement Phase, a Navy Movement Phase for each of the players. During the Army Movement Phase a player may order his armies to any adjacent territory. If not controlled by him or if another player moves to the same territory on his turn, this will lead to combat in the Combat Phase. It is in the Naval Movement phase which navies may be ordered to transport armies in the territory that they occupy for an invasion of another territory or the reinforcement of a territory of that players. Naval sorties may also be ordered which send ships from one of your territories to fight the ships in another territory and then return to its point of departure.

After all of the players' armies and fleets have been given orders, then a combined Combat Phase takes place. In nine rounds of land and naval combat the attacking forces will assault the defending forces, each round causing some casualties on both sides. When one side reaches its breaking point, it will retreat to an adjacent territory if it is a land unit and another port containing territory in the region in the case of defending ships. If such is not available, all will be destroyed. It is in the area of a unit's breaking point that the units quality rating plays an important role. An English unit might, for example, be able to take 50% losses before breaking whereas a similar Russian unit might take only 12% before the retreat would begin. This rule holds for both armies and navies.

CC has one of the widest selections of difficulty and goal levels seen in a fixed scenario game (one in which you are not allowed to design your own scenarios, as you can for example in Mech Brigade). Each of its computer controlled players may have its relative strength set on a ten point scale giving a vast number of permutations. The victory point level required to win can also be varied between a low of only 500 points to an unlimited game. This allows the tailoring of any level of play required, from a solitaire game of a novice to the play of up to six cut throat experts. These factors, along with the three basic scenarios to which they would be applied, provide one of this games most selling qualities.

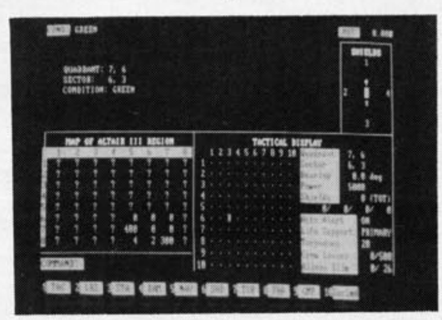
There are some features or strategies not covered in any detail in the otherwise comprehensive documentation which should be pointed out. The first is the extreme vulnerability of a player who controls only one territory in a given region. If such territories show a naval presence, then it is ripe for a sortie. Should you sortie against such a territory and force a retreat, then all of the defending (expensive) fleets will be destroyed, leaving the land forces stranded. You should also leave the territory from which you send a major sortie or invasion well defended. Should such a territory fall, returning sorties and any failed invasions will be destroyed. Also, pay close attention to the terrain value of a proposed target, as good defensive terrain can more than make up for numbers. Of course, all of these rules apply just as strongly to the person on the receiving side. Expand in a region so that more than one territory is held, watch for a weakly held territory from which sorties are staged, and plan your defense keeping the territories terrain in mind.

Colonial Conquest is not a serious recreation of the colonial era. What it is, is a challenging and enjoyable multi-player or solitaire game. While containing the flavor of the period, it plays easily and gives ample opportunity for the Diplomat or the General in you to stab your opponents, conquer territories, and build an Empire on which the sun never sets.

Stewart McKames

STAR FLEET ONE

Name:	Star Fleet One
Type:	Spacewar
System:	IBM
# Players:	One
Price:	$49.95
Designer:	Trevor Sorensen
Publisher:	Cygnus Software Webster, TX



You begin Star Fleet One (SF1) as a cadet trainee in command of United Galactic Alliance Ship "Republic", an Invincible class Heavy Cruiser based on Cygni Epsilon Three. From there, you are dispatched deep into the galaxy on missions against the Krellan and Zaldron fleets. On each mission you are given a certain number to days to destroy a specified number of Krellans with a small number of starbases for support.

As a trainee, your early mission parameters will be rather easy to attain and you have a lot of starbases for support. As you complete missions and advance in rank, the parameters become more difficult.

Your ship has some 13 critical systems and 500 crew including space marines, security, and operations personnel. Two hits at close range will generally penetrate a shield and then you must scramble to reallocate your shield power or turn your ship so that a different shield faces the enemy.

Although SF1 has its roots in the old Star Trek computer games of a few years back, the people at Cygnus have added many features which make this a remarkable game in its own right.

For example, you can disable a ship rather than destroy it. If you successfully tow it back to back (using your tractor beam) your mission efficiency increases.

You may also move close to a disabled enemy and use your transporter to transport space marines into the other ship. A boarding battle will ensue (with some nice sound effects) and you may or may not capture the enemy ship. If you capture the ship then his energy and any prisoners will be transferred to your ship. Taking prisoners back to a starbase really increases your efficiency. Of course, towing Krellan ships and transporting Krellan prisoners has some hazards of its own. The Krellans may beam a spy aboard your ship or a prisoner might escape. In either case, they run amuck and cause damage until your security crew can capture or kill them.

You can use torpedoes as if they were mines. Laying a few torpedoes in various sectors is a very good tactic to use when Zaldron hunting as the mines are undetectable by Zaldrons or Krellans and the enemy may easily blunder into them. Unexploded mines may be retrieved and used again. By dropping 10 mines in the same sector as the starbase, then docking, then leaving and retrieving those 10 mines, it is possible to have 30 torpedoes instead of the usual 20.

The Star Fleet Command format gives you a larger task than just seeing how many Krellans you can kill in a given number of days. The new features, including mine laying, transporters, tractor beams, and ship-to-ship fighting add a needed dimension to the basic phaser-torpedo battle sequence and gives the player something else to consider when thinking about the final efficiency rating.

The game is well implemented on the IBM-PC and takes advantage of the function keys to initiate game orders. There are some very good character graphic sequences at the beginning of the game and sound is used effectively at various places. The two manuals which come with the game are very well organized. I especially liked the "Training Manual".

As stated above, Star Fleet One is a truly remarkable update of the classic Star Trek game

Mark Bausman

STAR CRYSTAL

NAME:	Star Crystal
TYPE:	Adventure
SYSTEM:	Apple II Series
FORMAT:	Diskette
# PLAYERS:	1
AUTHOR:	Jim Long, Terry Gray, and Jeff Billings
PRICE:	$39.95
PUBLISHER:	Ba'rac Limited P.O. Box 21830 Shreveport, LA 71120-1830

Jake Sligot kicked the useless lantern away and listened as it crashed down the staircase in the dark. He winced as the sharp talon of a tiazar scratched his face and wished he could see the fowl so he could make certain of the next day's breakfast. "Three blasted lights!" he expectorated from his dry mouth as visions of expletive deleteds danced in his head. "What does this planet do, devour light?" The ex-scout attempted to inch his way carefully down the stairs, but the spiraling stairway was to be his descent into eternity. What a glorious feast for the Tilok Lizards had Jake Sligot turned out to be.

Star Crystal (SC) is a text adventure game based on the famous Traveller series of role-playing games, aids and supplements. The fiction behind SC is placed carefully and consistently with previously published material in the Traveller universe. This adventure, the first in a series, takes place on the planet, Mertactor, in District 268, Subsector N of the Spinward Marches Sector. SC contains many advantages for the Traveller RPG player who has no local gamemaster and desires to play within the system. First, the common vocabulary between the RPG and SC enables the experienced role player to identify and categorize animal and human encounters with little difficulty. Those unfamiliar with typical Traveller descriptions of "gatherers," "killers," and "scavengers" may need to borrow the basic rules to brush up. Second, the combat system is based upon Snapshot rules (another Traveller rule set) and is easily understood by the veteran spacer within the common universe. Third, the series promises interaction with character generation rules from the RPG series, since a Citizens of the Imperium character generation utility will soon be available. When the utility is available, the player will no longer be limited to an ex-scout character, as he is thus far. The skills allotted to the ex-scout character are already written in basic Traveller terminology. Fourth, when SC is completed, the map of the temple, shelter, cavern and planet provides a useful setting for creating one's own adventures for the role-playing game. Hints for "Campaign Interfacing" are included in the documentation and even the basic Library Data (included in the documentation) is familiar to the experienced role-player.

The information is given to the player via a divided screen. The upper portion of the screen describes the general location, while the lower portion of the screen accepts the player's input and describes the immediate environment within the location. This divided screen assists in mapping the adventure, since one is never in doubt as to general location, but still has room to maneuver within the location. Acceptance of commands to go directly to objects within the location speeds exploration considerably.

Yet, for all it has going for it, SC is susceptible to many of the typical flaws of text adventure games. Do spelling errors annoy you? You'll love fighting giant "tras" instead of "rats." At least, I assume that's an error, since rats are described in the SC's documentation, but only "tras" show up. Do you hate detailed descriptions with key words which the parser doesn't know? SC has them. Try to get a drink at the sink in the shelter. Examine the sink. You are told that it has a faucet. Try to turn on the faucet, however, and the parser doesn't know what a "faucet" is. Try to "Turn on sink" and it wants to know how to do that. If you enjoy wasting time on a ridiculous parser, you'll love SC. Further, as noted within the fiction, one of the main obstacles in the game seems to be finding light when your cold

PLEASE TAKE TIME TO FILL OUT READER INPUT DEVICE

light lanterns, filled in the description's own words with three days' worth of chemical, malfunction within 24 hours. There is no logic to the malfunction. It is simply a "deus ex machina" to foil the exploration or destroy a character. I prefer more logical obstacles in my adventuring. Last, but certainly not the least annoying is the program's tendency to forget things. Disappearing canteens, keys and artifacts abound. No, they are not to be found by backtracking in case one has violated the weight and displacement formulae.

Another criticism involves the system of encounters. Even though the computer divides the screen into a general description and specific description, it is possible to be in hand-to-hand proximity with an animal or human before having a chance to ready one's weapon. This may not be too unreasonable in narrow corridors, but certainly seems unreasonable within an exterior clearing or courtyard.

SC is enjoyable when one is simply exploring the well-designed locations and examining the objects within each location. It isn't fun when one is trying to play "Stump the Parser" or "What's My Light?" But in all fairness to SC, many adventure games have evidenced this same problem. The scenario is well-conceived and the scientific thesis held by the deceased offers stimulation for its own campaign. SC bodes well for future interactive Traveller adventures, but the initial offering could have used more playtesting and a more user-friendly game system.

Johnny L. Wilson

SPECULATOR

NAME: Speculator
TYPE: Strategy
SYSTEM: IBM PC
PRICE: $69.95
#PLAYERS: 1-6
PUBLISHER: OCO Software
P.O. Box 1067
Belvedere, CA 94920
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(800) 446-3400



"At 6:49 A.M. CST, Hong Kong Gold reports are that gold is weaker against the U.S. Dollar." You hurriedly phone your broker and put in an order to sell gold "short" (that is, sell gold that you don't have at present on the assumption that you can purchase it at a lower price before you have to "deliver"). In SPECULATOR, you get a chance to interpret news reports and estimate their effect on market conditions. Unlike many simulations which reflect price changes over weekly or monthly periods, SPECULATOR practically puts you in the pit. It simulates "real time" trading with a scale of 1 minute of playing time equal to 6 minutes of "real time." The graphics even allow you the privilege of watching your broker answer the phone and view the floor broker moving to the appropriate post to execute your order on the floor of the exchange.

The realism used in this simulation is remarkable. One is able to buy at the current market value; buy below the market value using an MIT. (Market if Touched - becomes an active market order when a certain price is reached) order; sell at a pre-arranged MIT. order; sell at a given price OB (Or Better - will sell at a given price or higher price); sell short; use a spread order (simultaneous selling and buying of related contracts which are related to one another); using GTC (Good til Canceled - order remains with the specialist on the floor of the exchange until a certain price or contingency is reached), OCO (One Cancels Other - an offsetting mechanism where if one part of the order is filled, the other part is canceled) orders; and having the flexibility to execute orders at the immediate beginning of the trading session (On Open) or at the end of the session (On Close). The effect of all these options (though they are not all immediately available to the first level or "novice" player and must be earned as a performance bonus as the player improves to "Speculator" and "Floor Trader") is to give the player a more intimate understanding of the mechanics of futures markets. It also seems to allow the player feel more "in charge" of the situation because he is able to communicate EXACT conditions for investment.

It's also a multi-player simulation and one of the few "realistic" simulations based on actual market conditions to allow this. TYCOON reflects actual market conditions and an excellent degree of realism, but only 1 investor can compete within the same market environment. In SPECULATOR, up to 6 players can compete at the same time. This feature also presents a problem, however. It is very difficult for more than 1 player to use the keyboard at the same time. When the market is about to open, there is only 1 minute to enter "On Open" orders whether there is 1 player or 6. Further, since the market keeps on moving, even when 1 player is in transaction mode, there is an inherent advantage in entering one's orders first. The scaled "real time" is a vital ingredient to the feeling of being there within the simulation, but either there needs to be some other way of providing input from the players than from the keyboard or there ought to be a feature which allows the "freezing" of the "real time" until all players may enter their orders.

Another important factor is the data disk. Because the events, contingencies, and price fluctuations are geared to an actual 45 day profile of market conditions on three different exchanges (Chicago Board of Trade, Chicago Mercantile Exchange and New York Commodity Exchange), there is a significant correlation between what May orange juice does the first time you play the game and what May orange juice does every other time you play the game. In order to circumvent this tendency toward sameness, O.C.O. Software plans to market several different data disks to reflect different market histories. These will be a welcome addition to the game, since it will keep the game fresh and playable.

In spite of the fact that SPECULATOR allows the investor to play much closer to the market than its closest competitor, TYCOON (that is, the investor is able to act upon the news before the market as a whole acts upon or discounts it), the basic "futures" strategies described in CGW 4.3 will work. It is harder to be a fundamentalist in SPECULATOR, however, since one only has a 30 day history chart to work from where TYCOON offered annual histories of each commodity

Continued on pg. 63

RID #23 (use card at page 5)

On this page a number of games are listed for evaluation. When evaluating a game consider such things as PRESENTATION (graphics, sound, packaging, documentation); GAME DESIGN (design, playability, interesting?); LIFE (does the game wear well?)

For each game you rate place a 1 (terrible) through 9 (outstanding) next to the appropriate number. Leave blank any game which you have not played enough to have formed an opinion.

In addition to games, we have listed a few items about the magazine itself that we would like you to rate on the same scale.

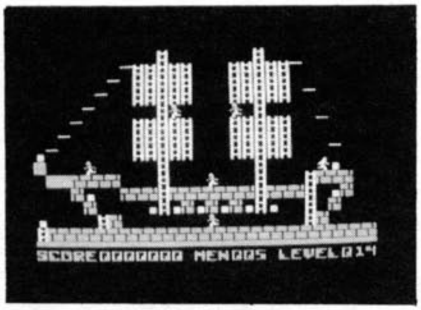
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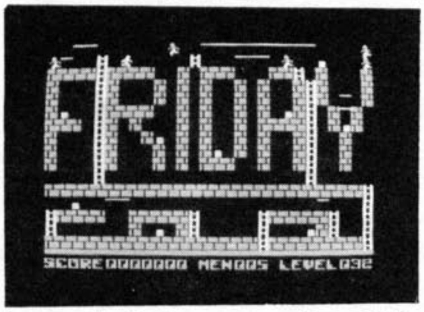
1. Kampfgruppe (SSI)
2. Mech Brigade (SSI)
3. M.U.L.E. (EA)
4. Crusade in Europe (MicroProse)
5. War in Russia (SSI)
6. Ancient Art of War (Broderbund)
7. Fighter Command (SSI)
8. Universe (Omnitrend)
9. Guadalcanal Campaign (SSI)
10. Reach for the Stars (SSG)
11. Carriers at War (SSG)
12. Operation Market Garden (SSI)
13. Field of Fire (SSI)
14. Computer Ambush (SSI)
15. Micro League BB (MicroLeague)
16. Seven Cities of Gold (EA)
17. APBA Mjr Lg Plrs BB (RandomHs)
18. NFL Challenge (XOR)
19. Decision in Desert (MicroProse)
20. Colonial Conquest (SSI)
21. Chickamauga (GDW)
22. JET (Sublogic)
23. Wilderness (EA)
24. Under Fire (AH)
25. Napoleon Waterloo (Krentek)
26. Super Bowl Sunday (AH)
27. Norway 1985 (SSI)
28. Golan Front (Sim Can)
29. GATO (Spectrum HoloByte)
30. Kennedy Approach (MicroProse)
31. F-15 Strike Eagle (MicroProse)
32. Legacy of Lylgamyn (Sir-tech)
33. Sorcerer (Infocom)
34. Ballblazer (Epyx)
35. Planetfall (Infocom)
36. Questron (SSI)
37. Racing Dest Set (EA)
38. Suspended (Infocom)
39. Phantasie (SSI)
40. Hitchhiker's Guide (Infocom)
41. Rescue Fractalus (Epyx)
42. Karateka (Broderbund)
43. Rescue Raiders (Sir-tech)
44. Infidel (Infocom)
45. Gemstone Warrior (SSI)
46. Six Gun Shootout (SSI)
47. Lordlings of Yore (Softlore)
48. Skyfox (EA)
49. Star Crystal #1 (Barac)
50. Wishbringer (Infocom)
51. Witness (Infocom)
52. Advent Con Set (EA)
53. Cover artwork/style
54. Overall issue
55. CIE/DITD review
56. Do you have a modem (Y/N)
57. Are you a subscriber to a telecommunications service (Y/N)
58. If so, which one? (Compuserve, Source, etc)
59. Do you purchase educational software?
60. Which computer(s) do you own?
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SPECULATOR (cont.)

in graph form. It is easier to be a technician in SPECULATOR, however, since one may place a buy-sell order immediately after news which will affect the basic supply and demand for the commodity hits the ticker. For example, you read that meteorologists predict a severe winter on the east coast (not an actual event). This indicates that there could be a freeze in Florida which would reduce the supply of orange juice. Reduced supply means increased demand which means higher futures prices. Therefore, you want to buy orange juice futures before anyone else can. In TYCOON, there is a definite advantage to following the news, but the price fluctuation has already begun by the time the player reads about it. In SPECULATOR, the player has to move in a hurry before he loses out on the advantage which the news gives him/her.

SPECULATOR is the first investment program I've seen which eclipses the fine line of Blue Chip Software investment simulations in tutorial value. The two books of documentation which are packaged with the program (the Game Manual - which explains everything from booting the program to how to place an order and the Market Reference Guide - which explains everything from the size of a contract to factors that influence prices) are understandable and make a valuable resource for perusing the financial pages and/or publications distributed by brokerage houses. Between the two booklets, almost any conceivable order is defined from both the perspective of real trading and playing the game.

SPECULATOR compares favorably with any other investment simulation on the market to date. It is competitively priced for the basic game and should be an especially worthwhile investment with the addition of new data disks. I look forward to the projected release of a stock market simulation in the near future.

Johnny L. Wilson

INCUNABULA

Name:	Incunabula
Type:	Strategy
Format:	IBM-pc
#Players:	1-6
Author:	Steve Estvanik
Publisher:	Avalon Hill Game Co. Baltimore, MD



Incunabula, Avalon Hill's multi-player game of the rise of ancient civilizations, asks only that you lead your small tribe along the road of increasing size and social complexity to eventual Imperial Dominion. The kind people of Avalon Hill have, however, recognized that some tribes are a bit more chaotic than others; they are better destroyers than builders. For those of you who, quite unlike me, fit this barbaric mold, Incunabula is a game of ancient "de-civilization", in which you raise your small tribe slowly into a vast Horde, demanding tribute from proud nations or destroying them at your whim.

In design and play, Incunabula is very much like Avalon Hill's board game, Civilization, in that your tribe progresses by stages determined by your trade and the number of cities you possess. Why Avalon Hill didn't just call this game "Computer Civilization" is a question open to speculation.

Trade, without question, is the most important aspect of the game, as successful trading is crucial to your gaining those skills necessary to any would-be empire. As a result of trading, your group may acquire such diverse skills (or Arcana, as the game refers to them) as metal working, navigation, music and philosophy. The selection of skills is not, though, a straitforward action.

The skills required may vary from player to player depending upon his BASIS OF LAW (BOL). There are four possible BOLs, ranging from a strict Theocracy to the highly chaotic Khanate. The former requires a long list of skills culminating with theology and philosophy while the latter requires and indeed allows no skills beyond the inherent ones of rape, pillage and burn.

Within their limitations and requirements, the four BOLs add one of the needed opportunities for variation in the game. Additionally, the computer run players vary in their personalities or "humors". These humors, which can be human or randomly assigned, as can the BOLs, direct the behavior of the computer players and can be used to predict their probable value in an alliance or danger as a neighbor. The humors vary from the win oriented "Choleric" types to the "Sanguine" types, who seek balance but also want to keep the game interesting in unpredictable ways.

The inclusion of different personalities and the different BOLs, when added to the different places you might randomly start on the map give the game its only sources of variation other than those due to human interaction which would not exist in solitaire games. The game has no option for map variation which would have greatly added to its projected lifespan. It also has no option to vary the difficulty level other than the option to increase the probability of natural disasters from likely to inevitable. This lack of variance suggests that the probable solitaire life of the game could be rather limited.

Incunabula is an interesting and enjoyable multi-player game.The combination of combat, goods trading, and diplomacy will give a wide variety of gamers something worth a closer look.

Stewart MacKames

READER INPUT DEVICE

The RID for this issue reflects a trend, on the wargame front, towards sophisticated tactical simulations. *Kampfgruppe*, the **CGW Game of the Year,** maintains the number one spot, closely followed by its modern equivalent - *Mech Brigade. Ancient Art of War,* another tactical level game continues to rate highly with our readers. On the adventure/action side of the ledger we find *Wizardry I* retaining the coveted top spot. We're beginning to think this one will **never** give any other adventure game a chance at numero uno. However, stay tuned for *Ultima IV*, we have a sneaking suspicion that Lord British just may do the trick.

STRATEGY

		Times Rated	Top Ten	Rating
Kampfgruppe	SSI	2	2	7.96
Mech Brigade	SSI	1	1	7.72
M.U.L.E.	EA	12	11	7.54
Ancient Art of War	Brodrbnd	3	2	7.46
War in Russia	SSI	5	5	7.45
Crusade in Europe	MicroPrs	2	2	7.42
Fighter Command	SSI	7	5	7.30
Universe	Omnitrend	3	2	7.29
Guadalcanal Campaign	SSI	8	7	7.28
Carriers at War	SSG	3	3	7.26
Seven Cities of Gold	EA	6	5	7.24
Reach For the Stars	SSG	3	1	7.15
Computer Ambush	SSI	5	3	7.22
Operation Mkt Grdn	SSI	2	1	7.17
MicroLeague BB	MicroLg	2	0	7.16
Combat Leader	SSI	5	3	7.11
Computer Baseball	SSI	6	4	7.10
Galactic Gladiators	SSI	3	2	7.07
Field of Fire	SSI	3	1	7.05
Flight Sim II	Sublogic	5	2	7.05
Carrier Force	SSI	5	3	7.04
Sundog	FTL	3	1	7.04
GATO	SpectrmHb	2	0	6.87
Excalibur	Atari	1	0	6.85
Cosmic Balance	SSI	5	3	6.83
Bomb Alley	SSI	4	3	6.82
Eastern Front	Atari	4	2	6.81
Southern Command	SSI	5	3	6.79
Star League BB	Gamestar	1	0	6.78
Battle For Normany	SSI	2	0	6.77
Gulf Strike	AH	4	0	6.75
Geopolitique 1990	SSI	3	0	6.73
Kennedy Approach	MicroPrs	2	0	6.73
North Atlantic '86	SSI	2	0	6.65
Cartels & Cthrts	SSI	4	2	6.62
Knights of Desert	SSI	5	2	6.61
Rails West	SSI	3	0	6.57
Fifth Eskadra	Sim Can	2	0	6.53
Computer Quarterbk	SSI	2	0	6.48
Robotwar	Muse	3	1	6.44
Imperium Galactum	SSI	1	0	6.34
Legionnaire	AH	3	1	6.31
Paris in Danger	AH	1	0	6.29
Grey Seas/Skies	SimCan	4	0	6.24
Broadsides	SSI	4	0	6.23
Fortress	SSI	2	0	6.16
NATO Commander	MicroPrs	2	0	6.10
Panzer Jagd	AH	1	0	6.08
Andromeda Conq	AH	1	0	5.68
Fall Gelb	Sim Can	3	0	5.41

ADVENTURE/ACTION

		Tms Rated	Top Ten	Rating
Wizardry I	Sir-tech	16	16	7.76
Ultima III	Origin	10	10	7.64
Phantasie	SSI	2	1	7.37
F-15 Strike Egl	MicroPrs	4	3	7.24
Legacy of Llygamyn	Sir-tech	6	5	7.22
Knight of Diamonds	Sir-tech	11	11	7.19
Questron	SSI	4	3	7.18
Sorcerer	Infocom	4	3	7.14
Archon I	EA	10	9	7.14
One on One	EA	7	5	7.13
Choplifter	Brodrbund	4	3	7.13
Galactic Advntrs	SSI	1	0	7.10
Zork Series	Infocom	7	6	7.09
Pinball Con Set	EA	4	4	7.08
Lode Runner	EA	6	2	7.07
Planetfall	Infocom	3	0	7.05
Music Const Set	EA	1	0	7.00
Ultima II	Origin	8	5	7.00
Hitchhiker's Guide	Infocom	2	1	6.98
Ultima I	Origin	2	0	6.96
Racing Dest Set	EA	2	0	6.94
Deadline	Infocom	3	1	6.94
Rescue on Fractalus	Epyx	2	0	6.88
Olympic Decathalon	Microsft	4	2	6.86
Suspended	Infocom	5	2	6.80
Summer Games	Epyx	2	0	6.79
Ballblazer	Epyx	2	0	6.78
Karateka	Brodrbnd	1	0	6.72
Rescue Raiders	Sir-tech	1	0	6.65
Archon II	EA	4	1	6.64
Witness	Infocom	1	0	6.61
Timeship	Five Star	1	0	6.60
Infidel	Infocom	2	0	6.57
Spy vs Spy	First Str	1	0	6.57
Mig Alley Ace	MicroPrs	3	0	6.55
Gemstone Warrior	SSI	2	0	6.52
Solo Flight	MicroPrs	3	0	6.42
Advent Con Set	EA	1	0	6.42
Suspect	Infocom	3	0	6.39
Mail Order Monstr	EA	1	0	6.35
Mask of the Sun	Brodrbnd	1	0	6.27
Six Gun Shtout	SSI	1	0	6.23
Seastalker	Infocom	1	0	6.17
Sword of Kadash	Penguin	2	0	6.09
Murder on Zinder	EA	4	1	6.08
Timezone	Sierra	1	0	5.92
Lordlings Yore	Softlore	1	1	5.88
Realm of Imposs	EA	2	0	5.80
Zenji	Activisn	1	0	5.53
Telengard	AH	3	0	5.11

Reader Service #67 ➤

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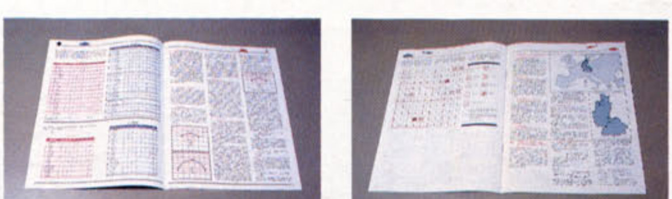
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